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THE WRITTEN WORD.

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THE WRITTEN WORD:

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

BY

WILLIAM HUMPHREY,

PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

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PREFACE.

In the following pages I have drawn freely from the learned work of Cardinal Franzelin *De Divinâ Traditione et Scripturâ.* In fact, this volume is little more than an attempt to popularise in English some of the arguments of the more dogmatic chapters of that admirable treatise.

I shall have attained my end in writing it, should it serve to deepen in its readers their appreciation of the inestimable treasure which they possess in the Sacred Scriptures.

W. H.

acc: 198

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THE WRITTEN WORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE BELIEF OF THE JEWS AS TO THEIR SACRED SCRIPTURES; AND THE CONFIRMATION OF THAT BELIEF BY THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF JESUS CHRIST AND OF HIS APOSTLES.

It is an historical fact which will not be denied, that there existed amongst the Jews, at the date of the Christian era and before it, a collection of sacred books.

These books, taken singly, differed widely as to subject, style, origin, and scope. But the Jews attributed to them, one and all, a character which at once distinguished them from all other books, and caused them to be regarded in their eyes as an individual whole.

This character was the Divine authority of every one of these books, and of every part of each book. Hence the homogeneous nature of the entire collection, and the equal and identical dignity and authority of its several parts.

This belief of the Jews as to their unique collection of sacred books—a belief which underlay, affected, and even ruled, their whole religious, political, and domestic life—was certainly known to Jesus of Nazareth and to His apostles.

Now, neither He nor they condemned this belief as false, or threw suspicion upon it as unfounded. On the contrary, both He and they confirmed it by supposing its truth in their own teaching, and as a foundation of their own doctrine, and by intimately connecting with it the religious system of which they were the founders.

That there existed among the Jews, in the time of Christ, a collection of sacred books for public use, and influencing the whole religious and civil life of that people, is an easily ascertained and undeniable fact. All who allow the *documentary* value, as apart from the religious value, of the books commonly known as the Scriptures, will admit this.

We read, for instance, in the Second Book of Esdras, that after the return of the children of Israel from their captivity at Babylon, the people were gathered together as one man to the street which is before the Water-gate, and they spoke to Esdras the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Esdras read it plainly, standing upon a step of wood which he had made to

speak upon, in the street that was before the Water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women and all those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book, and they understood when it was read. And as he read and interpreted to the people who stood round about him, they lifted up their hands, and they bowed down and adored God with their faces to the ground, and all the people wept. On the second day also, the chiefs of the families of all the people, the priests and the Levites, were gathered together that Esdras should interpret to them the words of the Law; and what they found written in the Law that the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, that they proclaimed and published in all their cities and in Jerusalem. Moreover, he read in the Book of the Law of God day by day from the first day till the last of the solemnity—the Feast of Tabernacles, which they celebrated because they found it enjoined in the Book of the Law. And finally, on the great fastday, when the seed of the children of Israel separated themselves from every stranger, and stood clothed in sackcloth and with earth upon them, and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers, they read in the Book of the Law of the Lord their God four times in the day, and four times they confessed and adored the Lord their God.

It cannot, then, be doubted that in the time of Esdras, some four centuries and a half before the Christian era, there existed among the Jews a collection of sacred books for public use, which influenced the whole religious life of that people.

Again, from the First Book of Machabees we find that during the persecution of Antiochus, who set up the abominable idol of desolation upon the altar of God, his followers cut in pieces and burnt with fire the Books of the Law of God; and every one with whom the books of the Testament of the Lord were found, and whosoever observed the law of the Lord, they put to death according to the edict of the king.

From the Second Book of Machabees, also, we learn that, after the delivery of the people from Antiochus, there were gathered together out of the countries the books both of the prophets and of David, and the epistles of the kings, and the books concerning the holy gifts.

It is, then, equally certain that in the time of the Machabees, little more than a century and a half before the Christian era, there existed among the Jews, as in the time of Esdras, a treasured and religiously venerated collection of sacred books.

Further, and to come to the time of Christ Himself, we read that when He went into the synagogue at Nazareth, according to His custom

on the Sabbath-day, He rose up to read, and the Book of Isaias the prophet was handed to Him; and He expounded to the people, saying, "This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears."

When, in like manner, St. Paul entered into the synagogue at Antioch on the Sabbath-day, after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue invited him and his companions to make exhortation to the people. And, finally, the same St. Paul, referring to this religious reading of their sacred books by the Jews in the synagogues, and bewailing the veil of unbelief which obscured their spiritual vision, says to the Corinthians, "Until this present day, the self-same veil in the reading of the Old Testament remaineth, not taken away; even until this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart."

The fact of a collection of sacred books existing among the Jews, religiously reverenced by them, and extensively used in their religious exercises, is therefore manifest.

This collection comprised three classes of writings, and is therefore spoken of by various and independent writers as consisting of three parts.

In the prologue, for instance, to the Book of Ecclesiasticus, written in the third century before Christ, we read of "the Law, the Prophets, and other books, that were delivered to us from our

fathers." Philo gives the division as the Law; the words divinely delivered by the prophets; and the Hymns. Josephus does the same. In the Talmud, also, and the Jewish Bibles, the division is into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. Further, Christ Himself recognised and followed this distribution of the one collection, speaking of it as—the Law and the Prophets—or as Moses and the Prophets—or as the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. For instance, He declared to the doctor of the law who came tempting Him with the great question of the day, Which is the great commandment in the Law? that on the twin precept of charity towards God and towards man depended the whole Law and the Prophets. Again, after the Resurrection, on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, He rebuked Cleophas and his companion as foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets had spoken. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him." Once more, after having eaten with the eleven, to convince them of the corporeal reality of His risen body, He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me."

Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and He prefaced His exhortation to them with the words, "Thus it is written."

This term, *The Scriptures*, was the collective name of the entire collection of sacred books—a name proper to it, and to it alone—a name of excellence, moreover, distinguishing it from all other collections, and signifying the Divine and so equal authority of all the books, and of all their parts. In like manner, the formula of quotation, *It is written*, was restricted to signify that the passage quoted was taken from this collection, and therefore possessed its Divine authority.

Thus we find passages from various places brought together, and quoted as if they were from one and the same book, under the common formula, *The Scripture saith.*

For instance, when there was a dissension among the people because of Jesus, after He had preached to them on the last and great day of the festivity, some argued, "Doth not the Scriptures say that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the town where David was?" Here we have a quotation as if from one source. It contains, however, two distinct references: one to the Psalms, the other to the Prophecy of Micheas. Those, therefore, who thus spoke, and those also with whom they argued, regarded that

Prophecy and the Book of Psalms as integral parts of one collection, with one common name and one equal authority.

So also St. Peter, in his First Epistle, conjoins three passages—two from the Prophecy of Isaias, and one from the Book of Psalms—under the common formula, "Wherefore it is said *in the Scriptures.*" The passages are: "Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that shall believe in Him shall not be confounded." This is from Isaias. What follows—"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner"—is from the Psalms; while the continuation—"A stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal"—is again from Isaias.

Again, we find texts derived from diverse books under the formula, *one Scripture*, and *another Scripture.* In the Gospel narrative of St. John we read, "For these things were done that *the Scripture* might be fulfilled, You shall not break a bone of Him;" and again, *another Scripture* saith, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." The first is from the Book of Exodus; the second from the Prophecy of Zacharias.

Further, under the formula, *It is written in the Law*, passages are quoted from books of diverse classes; and so by the term *The Law*—a term proper to one class—is designated the whole collection. Jesus said to the Jews, as they stood

around Him in Solomon's Porch, "Is it not written in your Law, I said, You are gods." Again, when He spoke to the people concerning what death He should die, the multitude answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever." Once more, in His discourse to His disciples after the Last Supper, He told them of the fulfilment of the Scripture in the world's hatred of Him—"That the word may be fulfilled which is written in their Law, They hated me without cause." All three passages, quoted as written in the Law, are taken from various places of the Book of Psalms; while the second has reference also to the Prophecies of Isaias and Ezechiel. St. Paul also, in his Epistle to the Romans, quotes from five several Psalms, from the Book of Proverbs, and from the Prophecy of Isaias, as from *the Law*, and under the formula, *It is written.* From the same prophecy he also quotes in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, under the heading, *In the Law it is written.*

Finally, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul calls the whole collection of sacred books by the name of *The Holy Scriptures;* and then distributively he speaks of every book of that collection as belonging to *The Scripture*, and, therefore, by reason of what is signified by that name, to wit, its Divine inspiration, as profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, and to instruct in justice.

It is manifest, then, that *The Scriptures* is a name proper to a collection of sacred books, all and each of which are equally Scripture, and possess one and the same authority—the divine authority which that name denotes.

We might accumulate proof, were it necessary, by bringing testimonies from Josephus and Philo, who continually refer to the sacred books, and appeal to each and all of them as to Holy Scripture, showing thereby their belief in the unity of the collection, and consequently in the equal authority of its parts. Their evidence is valuable, not only as the expression of their individual belief, but as testifying to the common persuasion of the Jews of their day. Philo was a Hellenist Jew; Josephus was a Jew of Palestine, and of the sacerdotal tribe.

Moreover, from their writings we learn both what was the reason of the authority and the degree of authority ascribed by the Jews to their sacred books. Josephus says that those books, the didactic and historical, as well as the prophetical, were believed, and rightly believed, not only by himself, but by his people, to be *divine;* and that with all the Jews this was as it were a first principle for which they were ready to die. This was the degree or measure of the authority which they believed their sacred books to possess—a *divine authority.* The foundation of their belief

in this divine authority was their belief that all the books were written *by prophets, in virtue of a divine inspiration;* and that the collection contained none other save books so written. Hence, he tells us, it was reckoned unlawful to add, to omit, or to change them in any way. Philo also speaks over and over again of the sacred books as written by the prophets, by whose lips the Father of all delivered His oracles; and who, being inspired, spoke in the person of God.

It is clear, then, what was the Jewish belief as to the Scriptures of the Old Testament—that they were documents written under the supernatural operation of God, in such wise as infallibly to contain the Word of God, and to be not human, but Divine documents; and that he who believed them believed God Himself.

This belief, then, of the Jewish people, the existence of which is so clearly established and so undeniable—a belief which underlay, affected, and even governed, their whole religious, political, and domestic life—Jesus of Nazareth and His Apostles not only did not condemn as false, throw suspicion upon as uncertain, or interfere with as inconsistent with their own teaching, but both He and they suppose it, confirm it, found upon it, and intimately connect with it their own religious system.

Jesus confirms it when He appeals to their

Scriptures as to not a human, but a divine testimony, with a supreme and infallible authority. To the incredulous Jews who sought to kill Him He said, "I receive not testimony from man: I have a greater testimony than that of John." This greater testimony He declares to be threefold—the works which the Father gave Him to perfect; the voice of the Father; and *the Scriptures.* "Search," says He, "*the Scriptures;* for you think in them to have life everlasting, and the same are they that give testimony of Me." Again, "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also, for *he wrote of Me;* but if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Again, when the Jews took up stones to stone Him, as He walked in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch, at the Feast of the Dedication, because He had declared His oneness with the Father, He answered their charge of blasphemy with, "*Is it not written in your Law*, I said, You are gods? If He called them gods to whom the word of God was spoken, and *the Scripture* cannot be broken, do you say of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?"

In like manner He appealed to the chief priests and Pharisees and ancients of the people, who sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multi-

tude, who held Him as a prophet: "Have you never read *in the Scriptures*, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"

And, finally, to the Sadducees He answered, "You err, not knowing *the Scriptures*. Have you not read that which was *spoken by God?*"

Not only in controversy with the unbelieving Jews, but in the instruction also of those who believed on Him, Jesus appealed to Scripture as to an admitted, recognised, and irrefragable authority. To His disciples, who were gathered around Him as He sat on Mount Olivet, He said, "When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, *he that readeth*, let him understand." Again, to the same disciples, at the Last Supper, "The Son of Man indeed goeth, as *it is written* of Him." Again, during the Supper, He said, "But, *that the Scripture may be fulfilled*, he that eateth bread with Me shall lift up his heel against Me." Once more also, the Supper ended, the first mass celebrated, and the Eucharistic hymn sung, when they had gone forth of the city to the Mount Olivet, Jesus said to them, "All you shall be scandalised in Me this night, for *it is written*, I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." Again, in the garden, after the be-

trayal, when they had laid hands on Him, and as they held Him, He said to Peter, "How then shall *the Scriptures be fulfilled*, that so it must be done?"

This was in precise accordance with what He had previously said to the twelve, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were *written by the prophets* concerning the Son of Man."

So also after His Resurrection there is the same inculcation of the necessary fulfilment of the Scripture, "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the *prophets have spoken*." These were His words to Cleophas and his companion on the way to Emmaus; and then, "beginning at *Moses and all the prophets*, He expounded to them *in all the Scriptures* the things that were concerning Him." And they, after their eyes were opened and they knew Him, as He sat at table with them, said one to another, after He had vanished out of their sight, "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and *opened to us the Scriptures?*"

We have already referred to the incident in the synagogue at Nazareth, when He read, on the Sabbath-day, from the roll of Isaias the prophet; and how, when He had finished, and folded the roll, and restored it to the minister, and sat down, and

the eyes of all were fixed on Him, He said to them, "This day is *fulfilled this Scripture* in your ears."

We have referred also to His discourse to the apostles after the Resurrection, when He showed them His hands and His feet, and, to convince them of the material reality of His risen body, had eaten before them: "These are the words," said He, "which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are *written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms* concerning Me." Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand *the Scriptures;* and He said to them, "*Thus it is written*, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day."

What He Himself said, He put also into the mouth of Abraham in His parable of Dives and Lazarus. When the rich man, from the place of his torment, besought Abraham that he would send Lazarus to his father's house, that he might testify to his five brethren, lest they also should come into the like condemnation, Abraham answered, "They have *Moses and the Prophets;* let them hear them; if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead."

Finally, and the most striking testimony of all,

we have the use of Scripture, on both sides of the conflict, in the temptation of our Divine Lord by the Devil, after His forty days' fast in the wilderness of Jordan. Both appealed to the Sacred Scriptures, and both prefaced their quotations with —*It is written.*

The Apostles in their manner of teaching followed in this the example of their Divine Master. They make continual use of Holy Scripture, and presuppose its divine authority. From it they prove the divine dignity and the divine mission of Jesus Christ, and the consequent divinity and authority of His teaching; and when they quote Scripture, they preface their quotations with the same formulas. Thus St. Peter, at the election of Matthias into the Apostolic College, when he rose up in the midst of the brethren, said, "Men brethren, *the Scripture* must needs be fulfilled *which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David* concerning Judas; for *it is written* in the Book of Psalms, His bishopric let another take."

So also in his discourse to the people in Solomon's Porch, who greatly wondered at his healing of the lame man, he said, "Those things which God before had *shewed by the mouths of all the prophets*, that His Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled; which things *God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets* from the beginning of the world; for Moses and all the prophets, from Samuel and

afterwards, who have spoken, have told of these days."

In like manner we read that St. Philip the Deacon, as he sat in the chariot with the eunuch, the treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, on the road through the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza, began *at the place of the Scripture, in the Book of the Prophet Isaias*, which the eunuch was reading, and preached unto him Jesus.

So also St. James, in the Council of Jerusalem, in his discourse to the multitude after they had heard Barnabas and Paul telling what great signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them, spoke of God's thus taking of the Gentiles a people to His name as a fulfilment of Scripture, saying, "To this agree the words of the prophets, *as it is written.*"

St. Paul also at Thessalonica, when, according to his custom, he went to the synagogue, for three Sabbath-days reasoned with the Jews *out of the Scriptures*, declaring and insinuating that the Christ was to suffer, and to rise again from the dead. In the same chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the Bereans are said to have been more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all eagerness, daily searching *the Scriptures* whether these things were so.

Apollo, likewise, a Jew of Alexandria, an eloquent man, and one mighty in the Scriptures,

when Priscilla and Aquila had expounded to him the way of the Lord more diligently, with much vigour convinced the Jews of Ephesus openly *shewing by the Scriptures* that Jesus is the Christ.

In the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul declares that the Gospel of God, God had promised before by His prophets *in the Holy Scriptures.* Throughout that Epistle he continually proves his doctrine by testimonies from the Hebrew Scriptures, introducing each, as was his constant practice, with the formula, *It is written.* And in the same Epistle he teaches them and us that, "What things soever were written, were *written for our learning;* that, through patience and the comfort *of the Scriptures*, we might have hope."

To the Corinthians also he says, in his First Epistle, that he delivered unto them first of all what he had himself received: "How that Christ died for our sins, *according to the Scriptures;* and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, *according to the Scriptures.*"

Still more remarkable and convincing, as a testimony, not only to the Jewish belief in the divinity of their Scriptures, but to the Apostles' approbation and confirmation of that belief, is the way in which they, following the example of their Divine Master, without preface or preparation of the reader, quote Scripture in its *typical* sense. They thereby suppose and ratify

this certain persuasion and belief of the Jews, that their Scriptures had a typical sense, and consequently were divine, their divine authorship and authority being the foundation of that sense. As St. Thomas teaches, no merely human document, the result of merely human wisdom or human toil, could bear other than the literal sense; the typical belongs to the work of God alone, Who, by His providence, foresees and governs all things.

Amongst other instances, we have the references by St. Matthew, in his Gospel, to the flight into Egypt, as a fulfilment of that which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son;" and to the slaughter of the Innocents, as a fulfilment of that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet.

The same Evangelist says that Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes, and that without parables He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables." These words, in their literal sense, are those of the Psalmist.

St. John also records that when the soldiers, having obtained leave from Pilate, came and broke the legs of the malefactors who were crucified one on either side of Jesus on Calvary, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. "And these things," says the Evangelist, "were done *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, You shall not break a bone

of Him." These words, in their literal sense, belong to the ritual prescribed in the Book of Exodus for the Paschal solemnity.

There are many other quotations by the Apostles of the Hebrew Scriptures in their typical sense; but two more will suffice. The first is the reference by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, to the two sons of Abraham, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a free woman,—the one born after the flesh, the other by promise—"Which things," says the Apostle, "are said by an allegory." The second is the Apostle's argument, from the Law of Moses, as to the duty of the faithful to support their pastors. "Doth not the law also say these things? It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn."

Finally, if further proof were needed of the confirmation by Jesus Christ and His Apostles of the belief of the Jews of their day in the divinity of the Hebrew Scriptures, we have it in their arguments as to fundamental truths and doctrines of the gravest import, drawn from single words, particles, adjectives, and names which occur in those Scriptures.

So, for instance, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, after quoting from the Prophecy of Aggeus—"Yet once more, and I will move not only the earth, but heaven also;" continues, "In that he saith, *Yet once more*, he signifieth the

translation of the moveable things as made, that those things may remain which are immoveable."

Again, in the same Epistle, after quoting from the Prophecy of Jeremias, "Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will perfect unto the house of Israel, and unto the house of Judah, a new testament;" the Apostle argues, "Now, in saying, *A new*, He hath made the former old."

We find yet another instance in the same Epistle, when St. Paul demonstrates the excellence of the priesthood of our Divine Lord over that of the Levitical dispensation from the names Melchizedech and Salem, and what they signified, and from even the omission of that king's genealogy.

A very remarkable instance occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians, where St. Paul depends upon the use of the singular number in the promise made to Abraham, "To Abraham were the promises made, and to his Seed. He saith not, And to his *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, And to thy *Seed*, which is Christ."

We might multiply instances of the same sort, but those which we have quoted serve, with our previous proofs, to shew the recognition by Jesus Christ and His Apostles of the divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures. Their divine authority, therefore, cannot be called in question without a previous denial of His Divine mission and doctrine.

CHAPTER II.

THE IDEA OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, AS CONTAINED IN AND DERIVED FROM THE IDEA OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORSHIP.

It is the tradition of the Catholic Church, and an article of the Catholic faith, that the Sacred Scriptures are *divine documents.* God is their Author; and He is so in virtue of His supernatural action on their human writers. This action the Church, borrowing the language of Scripture itself, calls *Inspiration.*

A book might be called *divine* in various ways. In the first place, having regard simply to its matter, it might be called divine—as *containing* doctrine *divinely revealed* either to the writer or to others; and this even although the record of such doctrine were due to the writer only.

Again, and with greater reason, might a book be called divine, were such divinely-revealed doctrine *written with the supernatural assistance* of God the Holy Ghost, infallibly preserving the writer from error in all that pertained to the prin-

cipal scope of the document, even although outside this the record of the doctrine were the unaided work of the writer himself.

With still greater reason, then, is that book to be considered and called divine which is produced by God Himself, although through the instrumentality of man—which has God for its primary efficient cause—which is the result of an operation of God on the writer, both *in order to* his writing and *in* his writing, in such wise as that God Himself, and not man, should be the *primary and principal Author of the document*—and this in the most full, strict, and proper sense of the term.

This supernatural operation of God is called *His Inspiration*, using that term in its active sense; in its passive sense, or, as *their* inspiration, it belongs to the writers of the Sacred Scriptures.

That the Catholic Church holds God to be the Author of the Sacred Scriptures is plain from the decree of the Council of Florence, which defines that the Holy Roman Church most firmly believes, professes, and proclaims,—that the one true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, is *the Author* of the Old and the New Testament, that is, of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, since, *by the inspiration* of the same Holy Ghost, the holy men of both Testaments spoke.

This decree of the Council of Florence is

embodied also among the decrees of the Council of Trent. It is repeated in almost the same words. The Council declares that it receives and venerates all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament, since the one God is *the Author* of both.

Further, what those venerable Councils proclaimed centuries ago, the Council of the Vatican has confirmed and reiterated in our own day. It declares that the Church holds as sacred and canonical all the books of the Old and New Testaments, inasmuch as, being *written by the inspiration* of the Holy Ghost, they have *God for their Author.*

Finally, what the Bishops of the Church of God have in those various Councils collectively decreed, that they severally and individually profess at their consecration—that the Lord God Almighty is *the one Author* of the Old and of the New Testament, of the Law, of the Prophets, and of the Apostles.

It is evident, then, that the proposition—*God is the Author of the Sacred Scriptures*, is a dogmatic formula of the Catholic Church. It is one of those formulas whereby she expresses, enshrines, seals, and preserves a dogmatic truth—a formula which is so consecrated by her authority and use as that it cannot be rejected without, if not rejecting, at least incurring justly the suspicion of rejecting

some part of that truth which it is used and universally held to signify.

That this doctrine of the divinity of the Sacred Scriptures, held by the Catholic Church, was the doctrine also of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, may be proved from their attitude towards the Jewish belief of their day, from their manner of quoting Scripture, and from their express words.

Referring to the previous chapter, in which we adduced the testimony of Josephus and Philo, as credible, unexceptionable, and adequate witnesses to the belief of their countrymen and contemporaries, we may hold it as certain that the universal persuasion and profession of the Jewish people, whether in Palestine or in the countries whither they were scattered, in the time of our Divine Lord, His Apostles, and their immediate successors, was—that the writers of the sacred books were, in the writing of them, under Divine supernatural action; and this in such wise as that not only was the doctrinal and other matter contained in them divinely proposed by them to their readers, but also as that the writing itself should of necessity be principally attributed to the operation of God acting *on* man and *by* man.

Both Josephus and Philo speak of the Scriptures as written by the prophets by inspiration—they term their writing prophesying—and by a prophet they, in common with those whom they

represent, meant a man who spoke, or wrote, or acted, not in his own name, or in virtue of his own natural powers, but in the name of God, as personating God, and by a supernatural Divine impulse. To use their own words—God used the prophets as His organs, in order to the manifestation of those things which He willed—a prophet uttered nothing of his own, but all at the suggestion of another, God inwardly suggesting what things were to be said.

This being the Jewish belief, we need not, for those who have read the previous chapter, accumulate further proof to show that this was also held by Christ and His Apostles. Nor will it be necessary to encumber our pages and weary our readers with many quotations, to show, from the mode of quotation, the authority which both He and they attributed to the Hebrew Scriptures. The following will suffice.

St. Peter began his discourse at the election of Matthias with—"Men brethren, *the Scripture* must needs be fulfilled, *which the Holy Ghost spake* before by the mouth of David concerning Judas."

Again, the company of the brethren to whom Peter and John returned, and related all that the chief priests and ancients had said to them, charging them not to speak at all nor talk in the name of Jesus, having heard it, lifted up their voice to God and said, "Lord, Thou art He

that didst make heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are in them, who, *by the Holy Ghost*, by the mouth of our father David, Thy servant, *hast said*, Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people meditate vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes assembled together against the Lord, and against His Christ."

St. Paul also, writing to the Romans, speaks of the *Gospel of God*, which He had promised before *by His prophets* in the Holy Scriptures. The same Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, says, "Again, *He* limiteth a certain day, *saying in David*, To-day."

Finally, our Divine Lord Himself, speaking to the Sadducees, said, "You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was *spoken by God*, saying to you, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

In all these passages God is spoken of by our Divine Lord, and by SS. Peter and Paul, His Apostles, as the *Author of Holy Scripture;* and the writers of Holy Scripture are referred to as His instruments.

There are, besides these, other passages, differing in construction, but equally expressing the same sense; as, for instance, the words of Jesus to the Pharisees, "How then doth David in spirit

call Him Lord?" and the last words of David himself as recorded in the Second Book of Kings. "Now these are David's last words. David, the son of Isai said, the man to whom it was appointed concerning the Christ of the God of Jacob, the excellent Psalmist of Israel said, *The Spirit of the Lord hath spoken by me*, and *His Word by my tongue*."

Further, *the Scripture* is a term used by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians for God Himself speaking. This it could not have been had not St. Paul believed God to be the Author of Scripture, and to speak by the Scriptures. He says, "*The Scripture, foreseeing* that God justifieth the Gentiles by faith, *told* unto Abraham before, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

As to express apostolic doctrine with regard to the divine authorship or inspiration of Scripture, and consequently as to its divine authority and value, the principal passage is that in St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy—"*All Scripture inspired of God*." Here we may observe that it matters but little whether "inspired of God" be taken as a predicate, as most probably is intended in the Greek text, or as an adjective, affirmative of a property, as in the Vulgate; for, either way, the property already implicitly comprehended in the term *Scripture* is explicitly affirmed, whether by a predicate or by an adjective, of the same Scripture, namely, that it is inspired. Neither

does it much matter whether the subject "all Scripture"—*omnis Scriptura*—be taken collectively for *the whole of Scripture*, or distributively, as the Greek πᾶσαγρά́φη without the article would import, for *every* Scripture, that is to say, for every document to which the name of Scripture belongs, as proper to it, and as a name of excellence. Either way, the inspiration of Scripture is definitely affirmed; God, as inspiring, being its efficient cause, and it being terminatively the effect or result of His inspiration.

This general notion of inspiration we have hitherto drawn from the Scriptures themselves; but let it not be supposed that, by so doing, we have been begging the question. We have not founded upon the Scriptures formally as such, that is, presupposing them to be divinely-inspired documents. This would certainly have been to argue in a vicious circle. What we have founded upon has been the doctrine of the Prophets, of the Apostles, and of our Divine Lord Himself as contained in those documents, the *genuineness* and *veracity* of which we suppose, but the *inspiration* of which yet remains to be proved.

We come now to the testimony of Christian antiquity, and we find it universal and unanimous that not only is the Word of God *contained* in the Sacred Scriptures, but that that word, *formally as written*, is *from God as its Author*.

The Sacred Scriptures are there spoken of as *conscriptæ* by the Holy Ghost, as the letters of God, as the epistles of God to men, as utterances of God, as the doctrine of God, as Divine oracles. Again, God is spoken of as the Maker and Giver of the Scriptures; and the writing of them is attributed to the Holy Ghost, and denied to be merely human, God being their principal Author, and the writers being His instruments. This special conjunction of men with God, inspiring them to write and inspiring them in their writing, we find further explained from the analogous conjunction, in the supernatural order, of the members of Christ with Christ their Head. St. Augustine says, that when the sacred writers wrote what He shewed and said to them, it is in no way to be said that He Himself did not write; they, His members, wrote that which they knew from the dictation of Him, their Head; whatsoever He willed us to read of His words and deeds, that He ordered to be written by them, as by His own hand; and whosoever understandeth this oneness of co-operation will receive what he reads, narrated by the Disciples of Christ in the Gospel, none otherwise than as he would receive it if he saw the Hand of God's own Body writing it.

We may regard it, then, as the belief of all Christian antiquity that *God is the Author of the*

Sacred Scriptures; and these words are a dogmatic formula expressive of this belief.

By an analysis of this formula we may obtain a yet clearer idea of what that belief implies.

In every document two things have to be distinguished and considered: first, the ideas, conceptions, or judgments intended to be conveyed, or, in a word, the *sense;* and secondly, the *signs,* that is, the verbal signs, to wit, the words, or language whereby that sense is expressed.

Further, we must keep in view the end of the author, or, in other words, the scope of the book. From it we gather what, among the constituents of the book, was *per se* intended by the author, and is the *formal* of the book, as distinguished from the *matter* of the book. We hereby ascertain what is of the essence of the book, what constitutes it, and determines its species, and makes it to be such as and that which its author intended, as distinguished from the mere *matter* of the book, which may vary without the book itself ceasing to be what its author intended. Briefly, we must distinguish between what is *essential* and what is *accidental* to the book.

What we have called the *sense,* as opposed to the words or signs which express it, or what, in such books as are the Sacred Scriptures, we may call the *truths* conveyed, as distinguished from the *language* in which they are clothed and whereby

they are conveyed, constitutes the *formal* of the book; while the *signs* or words, including their order, and the language, along with its style and method, belong to the *matter* of the book.

We must however remember, that although these may, within certain limits, vary without essentially affecting the character of the book, without depriving it of its scope, and so frustrating the intention of the author, yet even they—the signs or words—must always be at least adequately adapted to express the sense or truths intended. Otherwise the *formal* of the book could not itself be preserved.

This distinction, as we have stated it, applies to such books as codes of law, to didactic books for the teaching of either speculative or practical truths, and to historical books intended to teach certain truths by means of the facts which they narrate.

In dogmatic books, however, or in dogmatic passages of books, and especially in those which contain superrational mysteries, certain words and certain formulas necessary to express the true conception of such mysteries may, as well as the mysteries themselves, pertain to the *formal* of the book, and not only, as in other cases, to its matter.

In like manner, in a book the scope of which is rhetorical and æsthetical, even the *style* might pertain to the *formal* or essential idea of the book; as would also the *order* in a history, were that

history intended to teach the chronological succession of events.

Hence it appears that no one could be in any true sense the author of a book, save he who should cause that at least the *formal* of that book, as conceived by him, should be committed to writing. If, therefore, one is the author of a book through the instrumentality of another, this other must necessarily, at the suggestion or dictation of the author, *conceive* in his mind *as to be written*, and by an impulse received from the author *be moved and will to write*, all those things, and those things only, pertaining to the *formal* of such book, which its principal author had *preconceived as to be written.*

Should any one of these requisites be wanting, he cannot be considered, as he cannot be, the real author of the book. For instance, he is certainly not the author of a book who communicates indeed his ideas to another, but this *not in order* to their being written, and who in no way *induces* that other to write them.

Again, no one would acknowledge himself as the author of a book, if what he wished to be comprehended as the *formal* of the book his instrument had not entirely accepted. He is not also the author of the whole book, and consequently he cannot simply and without qualification be called the author of the book, if his instrument has at his own dis-

cretion added something over and above what his principal intended and willed the book to contain.

When, therefore, we say that God is the Author of the Sacred Scriptures, through the instrumentality of inspired men, we must mean and implicitly profess our belief that the truths which God has conceived as to be communicated by means of the Sacred Scriptures to the Church, He has caused the minds of those inspired men to *conceive as to be written*, and that He has also moved their wills to express in writing *all* those truths, and those truths *only*.

It is, however, by no means required, in order to the Divine Authorship of the Sacred Scriptures, that the truths which God willed to be contained therein could not or should not have been otherwise known to the inspired writers. Previous knowledge of certain truths by man could be no reason why God should not conceive and will such truths to be communicated by means of Scripture to the Church, or why He should not be able to cause the inspired writers to conceive those truths as so to be written, and to will to write them.

Hence the idea of inspiration does not exclude human industry, study, the use of documents and witnesses, and other aids in order to the conceiving of such truths, so long as it includes a supernatural operation and direction of God which effects that the mind of the inspired writer should *conceive all*

those truths, and *those only*, *as to be written*, and that his will should likewise be *supernaturally moved to write* all and only the same truths, which truths were *previously comprehended* in the divine counsel *as to be written.*

Consequently,—understanding by *Revelation* the manifestation of something which is hidden,—revelation is not an essential element in inspiration. Taking revelation, however, not in the strict sense but in a not uncommon sense, as the proposition of truths by God Himself, then certainly every inspiration, in order to the writing of Sacred Scripture, was a revelation, first made interiorly in the mind of the inspired writer, and then, by means of his writing, proposed as the Word of God to others; thus constituting an object of faith both for the inspired writer himself, and for every one to whom his work should be sufficiently proposed as inspired truth.

So far as to the *formal* of the book; we come now to consider more expressly the *matter.*

It is evident, in the first place, that the *sense* of the principal author of any book, which is written through the instrumentality of another, cannot be expressed in writing unless signs or words are chosen and used which are adequate to convey it.

Hence, since God, by His inspiration of the *sense* of the Sacred Scriptures, so acts on the inspired writer in order to his writing that the docu-

ment written by him should infallibly, in virtue of that divine operation, really and truly contain the sense divinely intended, it follows that in that inspiration is included such a divine operation as that the writer should not only actually choose, but that he should also *infallibly choose*, such *signs*, that is, such words, phrases, expressions, or formulas, as are apt and adequate truly to express the sense divinely intended, or, in other words, the truths which God wills thus to communicate.

Inspiration, therefore, is not confined to the *sense* alone; it extends also, within the limits mentioned, to the *signs* or *words* which express and convey that sense.

Were it otherwise, while the writer's understanding of the sense, and his will to commit it to writing, would have God for their efficient cause, in virtue of His illustration of the writer's mind, and His excitation and motion of the writer's will,—the writing itself (including, as it does, in its idea the choice of signs to express the sense, that is, the choice of words to express the conceptions or ideas), would be purely and merely human.

Briefly, the ideas, both as in the divine mind and as in the writer's mind, would be divine, but the ideas *as written* would be human.

The chain would be broken which should have

connected *God as inspiring* with the document *as terminatively inspired.* A link would be wanting between the cause and the effect. Now we know that the strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link. Consequently, that document could not be regarded as inspired by God, in the writing of which man was left to his own unaided powers and resources.

Hence, inasmuch as God is, by His inspiration, not only the Author of the conceptions *as to be written*, but the Author also of the conceptions *formally as written*, the divine operation must in some way extend to the choice of signs to express the divine sense, and the committing of that sense to writing. The writing, in virtue of an inspiration which in no way extended to the signs, would not necessarily have God for its Author. A writer, inspired in mind and will, but wholly left to himself in the selection of signs, would be *fallible in his expression* of the inspired conceptions. From an inspiration so limited, it would not infallibly follow that the Scriptures were terminatively inspired, and the Word of God. As, therefore, with the *active* inspiration—that is, the supernatural action of God on the writer—there is necessarily connected the *terminative* inspiration of the work written; so in the notion of active inspiration is included a divine operation whereby the writer is rendered infallible in the expression, by means of

adequate signs or terms, of the inspired conceptions.

It is true that in very many at least of the Sacred Books their scope is such that their formal idea would not be altered or destroyed, were the same sense and the same ideas expressed in other words or in another style, so long as the terms used were fitting, as adequately corresponding to the ideas. For the most part, therefore, it pertains not to the formal but to the material idea of the Sacred Scriptures, that the truths which they contain be expressed by certain rather than by other equivalent terms. Hence, says St. Jerome—We do not consider the Gospel to be in the words, but in the sense of the Scriptures; not on the surface, but in the marrow; not in the foliage of the language, but in the root of the idea.

We have said that the divine operation must *in some way* extend to and influence the choice of signs,—for we do not maintain or mean that it extends in the same way to this as it does to the *formal* of the book. One may be most truly the author of a book, which is written by means of another as an instrumental cause, without supplying to him every individual term, the style and the whole grammatical and rhetorical construction of the book. It suffices, as it is required, in order to his principal authorship, that the author *direct* his instrument in the choice of adequate signs, so

as that he may not err in the expression of the ideas intended to be conveyed.

Briefly, and to sum up, then, it follows that, from the notion of inspiration, or from this—that God is the Author of the Sacred Scriptures through the instrumentality of their human writers, who are "*conscriptores*" with Him, so as that from His action on them it is infallibly certain that He is the author of their writings:—

1. There is no reason for affirming that,—in the very many cases where the choice of certain signs in preference to other equivalent signs belongs not to the *formal* but to the *material* of the book,—God by a supernatural prevenient action determined and supplied the individual signs and the mode of writing.

2. But there is certainly evident reason for affirming that, in the choice of adequate signs to express the divine sense, God so supernaturally aided and assisted the writers as that that sense should infallibly be truly and adequately expressed.

3. Further, in this assistance and direction as to the mode of the language, is included what is called the *grace of speech*, which, as explained by St. Thomas, is that whereby one speaks or writes efficaciously to the instructing of the intellect, to the moving of the affections, and to the swaying of the hearer or reader, as the case may be.

4. If, however, the individual words, or the

style in any passage, belong to the *formal* of such passage, then certainly they were supplied by God in precisely the same way as was the sense.

So much by way of negative argument—that divine suggestion, or, so to speak, dictation of individual words, is not essential to the notion of inspiration; and that such dictation cannot be deduced from this—that God is the Author of the Sacred Scriptures. Hence it ought to be presumed, when the opposite is not proved, that God permitted the writers (whose minds were already luminous with the divine truths to be written, and whose wills had been also divinely moved to write them) themselves, under a divine assistance indeed, but each, according to the bent of his own natural character, the nature of his education, and the extent of his erudition, to find and select the signs or words in which the divine ideas were to be clothed and conveyed.

But besides this negative argument, there are not wanting positive arguments to shew that, at least for the most part, the inspired writers, in their selection of the words, and in their grammatical and rhetorical style, were only aided, guarded, and fortified by the divine assistance, and that they were *not determinated* by any divine dictation.

The positive arguments are chiefly three. In the first place, there is in the Sacred Books a

manifest diversity of style and diction, evidently corresponding to a diversity in the intellectual character, endowments, and acquirements of the writers. So St. Jerome speaks of the style of Isaias as that of a nobleman and a man of urbane eloquence, without any alloy of rusticity; and he contrasts it with the rustic style of Jeremias, the villager of Anathoth; while, he says, at the same time, that as to the sense, that is, as to the truths which they committed to writing, both were equal, inasmuch as both prophesied by the same Spirit.

Secondly, Several of the sacred writers record not only the same events, but also the same sayings. Several of the Evangelists, for instance, record the same sayings of our Divine Lord. Now, in their several records there is a difference as to the words, although, as need scarcely be said, it is certain that He whose words they profess to record uttered one set of words and not another. Thus St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, in their Gospels, and St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, give variously the words used by Jesus in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. Further, while all the four differ more or less as to words, we may observe a certain similarity between the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the latter of whom is supposed to have had before him the Gospel of the former; and again, a similarity between the narratives of St. Luke

and of St. Paul, whose disciple and follower St. Luke was.

Thirdly, The writer of the Second Book of Machabees, which book all Catholics believe to have been written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in so many words attributes to himself and to his own powers and acquirements the style of the language and the method of his book. "If I have done my narration well," he says, "and as it becometh the history, it is what I desired; but if not so perfectly, it must be pardoned me; for as it is hurtful to drink always wine, or always water, but pleasant to use sometimes the one and sometimes the other, so if the speech be always nicely framed, it will not be grateful to the readers."

It is evident, therefore, that the notion of inspiration or of the Divine Authorship of the Sacred Books does not require in all cases *divine dictation* of the words to be employed by the sacred writers in their expression of the divine *sense* which they were inspired to convey.

Their use of study, their investigation of documents, interrogation of witnesses, and other evidence, and their excuses for rusticity of style and poverty of language, shew this only—that they were not inanimate, but living, intelligent, and rational instruments—that they were men and not machines—that they were human beings, and were

used instrumentally by their Maker as such, that is, in a manner corresponding to and becoming the nature, the mode, and the conditions of their being.

This may be explained and illustrated from the manner of God's ordinary dealings in the order of His grace. In conferring grace He uses external instruments, such as the Sacraments. Moreover, by grace He elevates and endows the human soul with supernatural faculties and forces in order to even such acts of various virtues as might, so far as their substance is concerned, be performed by the unaided powers of nature. By the addition of divine grace, these acts become supernatural, and belong to an entirely different order to that in which they would have been had they been done simply in virtue of the natural powers of the man left to himself. Similarly, in the formation of the Sacred Scriptures, God, their principal Author, made use sometimes of external instruments, supplying to the writers documents, witnesses, observation, or a natural knowledge of that which they were to write; while, at the same time, He conjoined with such external and natural means an internal, supernatural illustration of the understanding and motion of the will in such wise as to effect that all those things, and those things only, the writers should conceive as to be written and should will to write, which He, in His eternal counsel, had previously conceived and willed to be

communicated and proposed to His Church in writing as the Word of God.

Hence it is in no way a difficulty with regard to the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures that the writer of the Second Book of Machabees says:—"All such things as have been comprised in five books by Jason of Cyrene, we have attempted to abridge in one book; . . . and as to ourselves, in undertaking this work of abridging, we have taken in hand no easy task, yea, rather, a business full of watching and sweat; . . . but for the sake of many, we willingly undergo the labour, leaving to the authors the exact handling of every particular, and as for ourselves, according to the plan proposed, studying to be brief."

In like manner, no objection can be taken from the words of St. Luke wherewith he prefaces his Gospel:—"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a narration of the things that have been accomplished among us, according as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word; it hath seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed."

St. John also, Apostle and Evangelist, both in

his Gospel and in his Epistles, appeals to his own observation as to an historical motive of credibility. Having narrated the piercing of the Sacred Heart, he adds—"And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that you also may believe." His First Epistle also opens with—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life: for the life was manifested; and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us; that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you."

Such passages merely go to prove the existence and reality of the human element in the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, and in no way negative their Divine Authorship.

Further, it is not even essential to the notion of inspiration that the inspired writer should himself know that he is inspired. We say—*not essential to the notion*, for we do not allow that any one of the sacred writers was unconscious of the fact of his inspiration. His consciousness is for various reasons to be legitimately inferred, unless the contrary be proved. Of course, such consciousness, and certain consciousness, and con-

sciousness certain, moreover, not merely with natural but with supernatural certainty, would have been necessary if the writer had been also destined by God to propose his book to others as inspired, or to promulgate the truths wherewith he was inspired, as a divine revelation. But such destination and mission certainly does not belong to the essence of inspiration.

From this it follows that, even if the inspiration of the Deutero-canonical Books of the Old Testament had been unknown as well to their writers as to all their readers up to the time of our Divine Lord and His apostles, yet this would not militate against the reality of their inspiration as revealed to us by Christ, or by the Holy Ghost through the apostles.

It follows also, from what we have said, as to what is required, and what suffices to the notion of inspiration, that any mere divine assistance, in order to the prevention of error, and to the infallibility of the writers, does not amount to inspiration. Still more evidently, divine testimony to the entire veracity of a book previously written by an uninspired man, in virtue of his own human powers and faculties, will not cause that book to be inspired, and so of Divine Authorship.

The term *subsequent inspiration*, which some writers have erroneously used, is repugnant to the very notion of inspiration. A divine declaration,

that the document does not contain anything which is not true, is not divine *action on* the writer. Such a declaration could not make the act of writing in the past cease to have been merely human; or make a book, humanly compiled, to begin to be divinely written.

Insertion in the canon of Sacred Scripture is not save a testimony and declaration that the book so inserted is inspired. The insertion by the Church does not *effect* inspiration, but presupposes it.

So also, although there should exist in the Church other documents besides the Sacred Scriptures, which also contain the Word of God, and which have been written under the assistance of the Holy Ghost infallibly preserving their writers from error, yet such documents are not therefore inspired.

Finally, the Sacred Scriptures, being by way not of a private but of a public revelation, the extraordinary *charisma*, or grace of inspiration, in virtue of which they were written, ceased with the consummation of the Christian revelation, and did not endure beyond the days of the apostles.

We do not mean that the real and true inspiration of a private document,—that is, of a document not intended to propose doctrine to the universal Church,—is, even having regard to the fact of the completion and consummation of the

Christian revelation, absolutely repugnant. But such a document, if it existed, would in no way belong to the Sacred Scriptures, as delivered to the Church to be proposed by the Church to the faithful. It would fall into the same category, and would have the same value as private revelations, which do not pertain to the deposit of the *Catholic* faith, committed to the Church for preservation, proclamation, and explanation. Belief in such revelations obliges those only before whom they come with sufficient motives of credibility as to their divine origin.

Further, for the utter insufficiency of subsequent approbation, in order to inspiration, we have confirmation in the decree of the Vatican Council — that the Church regards as sacred and canonical those books, in their entirety and with all their parts, which are enumerated in the decree of the Council of Trent, and contained in the old Vulgate Latin edition, and this, not that, being compiled by merely human industry, they have been afterwards approved by her authority; and not, therefore, only in that they contain revelation without error, but inasmuch as, written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their Author, and have been delivered as such to the Church.

This decree, it will be observed, directly excludes two errors: first, that there are any books

of Holy Scripture written by merely human industry, and afterwards by approbation of the Church and insertion into the canon, reckoned sacred and canonical; and secondly, that certain books of Holy Scripture are divine by reason only of their matter, and apart from the mode in which they were written. The decree, moreover, positively teaches that the Books of Scripture are sacred by reason of the mode in which they were written, viz., under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in such wise as that they have God for their Author.

Divine attestation of the veracity of a book of merely human origin would indeed cause the truths contained in it to be truths divinely revealed, and so to be believed as the Word of God. But such a book, so written, would not be an inspired book, or Sacred Scripture in the proper sense of that term; although it might be called a divine book by reason of its matter, and of the truths which it contained.

We have, in a word, to avoid a confusion, which has led several into error, between the *containing* of divine truth, or of the Word of God, in a book, and the *divine origin* or *inspiration* of a book.

As to passages from profane authors, which are found in the Sacred Scriptures, we have also to distinguish between the inspiration of such passages and the inspiration of the relating of them and of their application. The quotation by an in-

spired writer of a passage from a profane author does not make that passage inspired; although the narration of it, and its application by the sacred writer, is the effect of inspiration. So, for instance, in the record of the sayings of the friends of Job, and of the vain reasonings of the wicked in the Book of Wisdom, and of the words of the blind man in the Gospel—"Now, we know that God doth not hear sinners,"—the recording of these is inspired, but the utterances recorded were not, and did not, because they could not, *become inspired.* So also in the application by St. Paul of the words of the heathen poet Aratus—"For we also are his offspring"—in his discourse to the men of Athens as he stood in the midst of Areopagus; and again, in his quotation in his Epistle to Titus of the words of Epimenides—"The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slothful bellies"—the testimony of "a prophet of their own;" his quotation and application of these passages was in both cases inspired, but in neither case were the passages in themselves, or as they stood in the Gentile authors, inspired.

We do not mean that it is impossible for a true but humanly written document, or part of a document, to become inspired but in this sense. As preceding natural knowledge of a truth is no reason why God could not or should not inspire the writing of it, so also the preceding natural

writing or human record of a truth is no reason which would in itself prevent the inspiration of the transcription of the same truth, and that in the same words used by the profane author.

We have an example of this in the inspiration of the Second Book of Machabees, which is professedly a compendium of the history of Jason of Cyrene, whom we do not suppose to have been an inspired author. There is no reason why the inspired writer should not have used the very words of Jason. Theoretically, that is, looking simply to what is consistent, and to what is inconsistent, with the notion of inspiration, all the matter might be inspired precisely as it stood in a humanly written book, it being at the same time entirely true. But supposing such a case, the book would really have been written twice, first by human industry, and afterwards by divine operation. As the words of its profane author, it was entirely human, and no subsequent approbation could make it otherwise as to its origin; as adopted to express inspired ideas, it is really divine, and has God for its Author. Practically, or, as a matter of fact, that such is the case as regards any entire book, we do not allow.

CHAPTER III.

THE INEFFICACY OF INTERNAL EVIDENCE, OR INTRINSIC ARGUMENTS TO DEMONSTRATE INSPIRATION; AND THE NECESSITY OF AN EXTRINSIC TESTIMONY TO MAKE KNOWN THE FACT OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

It is certain that no intrinsic arguments, taken from the nature of the sacred books in themselves, or from the effect which they may produce on the minds of their readers, will suffice to make manifest their inspiration, and to distinguish them as inspired from other books which are not inspired.

Equally inefficacious is the guarantee for inspiration, assumed for certain books from the fact that their authors were apostles. It arises from an entire confusion of ideas, both as to the notion of inspiration, and as to the nature of the apostolate.

Inspiration in order to writing, like the gift of prophecy, or inspiration in order to speaking, is a *charisma*, or special grace, which is, as theologians say, not permanent by way of a habit, but transient by way of an act; that is to say, it does not belong to, and remain with the writer apart from his writing, but is given to him in order to and in the process of that writing, and when that writing

is effected, then its cause, the *charisma* or grace of inspiration, ceases. In other words, the inspiration is *active*, as proceeding from God; is *passive*, as affecting the writer, and affecting him only in order to, and in, his writing, and is therefore as transient as the act of writing itself. It is permanent only in the result—viz., in the book which is *terminatively* inspired.

Again, inspiration in order to writing is a *charisma* distinct at once from a revelation immediately made by God to man; and from the gift of infallibility conferred by God on man, in order to his proclaiming such revelation either orally or by writing; and also from inspiration in order to speaking.

This distinction is manifest from what we have said in the preceding chapter, as to the notion of inspiration. It is proved also by the event, for we find many prophets and apostles who certainly possessed the *charismata* which we have named, and who as certainly were never inspired to write, who never pretended to write, and who never did write sacred books.

Again, as we have seen, inspiration in order to writing may be bestowed apart from revelation in its strict sense, apart from any mission to preach, and apart from inspiration in order to speaking.

The *charisma*, therefore, of inspiration in order to writing is distinct and separable from all those other gifts. It is not included in them, and it does not follow from them.

The *charismata* intrinsic and proper to the apostolate, according to its institution by Christ, were those of immediate revelation of divine truths, and of infallibility in preserving, preaching, and explaining them. There is no argument to shew, from the institution or from the promises of Christ, any intrinsic or essential connection between the apostolic character, or functions, and the *charisma* of inspiration in order to the writing of books. All the precepts of Jesus to His apostles relate to preaching and not to writing. The promises made by Him to them relate to those precepts ; and the *charismata* or graces bestowed in order to the fulfilment of their functions in accordance with His mind and will, follow the analogy of both. These graces are the result of the promises, and were bestowed in order to the fulfilment of the precepts.

It would certainly follow that had an apostle of his own accord, and by an act simply of his own judgment and will, committed to writing any part of the divine revelation committed to him, in order that he might thereby propose it to the belief of his disciples, he would have been *infallible* in so doing. He would have been as infallible in writing as in preaching by word of mouth the divine doctrine. But he would not have been *inspired;* his work would not have been an inspired book; and it would not have had God for its Author.

It is quite possible, moreover, on such an hypothesis, that his book might have contained

matters not relating to the divine doctrine. If so, then in the writing of these he was not only not inspired, but not even infallible. They would have lain outside the sphere to which his infallibility as an apostle extended.

From the genuineness, therefore, of an apostolic book, there follows the divinity of the revealed doctrine proposed in it, and the infallibility of the apostle in so proposing it; but it in no way follows that, because the book is genuine, and had an apostle for its author, it is therefore inspired.

What is true of the apostles as to the New Testament, is true also of the prophets as to the Old. The *charisma* of inspiration is not a consequence of either state, or necessary to either function. There were many prophets who were not inspired writers; and there were or may have been inspired writers who were not prophets.

Hence the *charisma* of inspiration was *extraordinary*, not only in this sense that it was not to be propagated through any succession of men, but also inasmuch as it had no essential connection with either the apostolate or the prophetical state and office.

As to the intrinsic arguments for the inspiration of individual books, that is to say, arguments taken from the nature or effect of the books themselves, dependence upon such arguments became a necessity of the Protestant position.

It was manifest that their fundamental principle

regarding the written word as the immediate utterance of the Holy Ghost, and as the one rule of faith, could not be sustained unless they could bring forward certain evidence of the inspiration of the sacred books which they had retained in their canon, and that from other sources than the apostolic tradition preserved in, and declared by, the Catholic and Roman Church. They had therefore to betake themselves to intrinsic arguments and criteria as foundations for, or as motives to, induce belief in the divine origin and inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.

The criteria on which they relied may be reduced to three; the historical, the dogmatic, and the empirical. The *historical* criterion they constituted in the miracles and prophecies recorded in the Scriptures themselves; the *dogmatic*, in the sanctity, sublimity, and unity of their doctrine; and the *empirical*, in the wonderful effects produced on the minds of their readers. Some added a fourth criterion, which may be called the *æsthetic*. This was closely connected with the dogmatic, and consisted in the sublimity and simplicity of the diction.

But whether we look at the matter generally or in detail, it is obvious at a glance that these cannot be laid down as principles, from any or from all of which it may be lawfully deduced that all the books known as Holy Scripture, and those only, are divinely inspired.

In the first place, in order that the inspiration of those books should be known with certainty, as undoubtedly made manifest by their possession of certain characteristics, it ought first to be established that such characteristics can have no cause other than inspiration. But this is assuredly not so; or, at any rate, it can in no way be certainly proved and known by us. For example, given that a book *contains* revealed doctrine, it may be invested with all those qualities, and yet it by no means follows that it is not a human work. This is evident both from the nature of the case, and from the existence of many such books which are confessedly not inspired.

Again, either such characteristics, taken all together, and as they are found existing in an eminent degree, are to be reckoned as effects which demonstrate inspiration as their cause; or, they may be supposed to do so singly, and in whatever degree they are found. This last is evidently absurd, for in that case not only the books comprehended in the canon, but an innumerable number besides, would be inspired. On the other supposition, there ought to be determined beforehand in what degree of eminence and in what manner such characteristics ought to be found. Now this, neither *a priori*, and from the nature of the case, nor *a posteriori*, and from any positive revelation of God, can be shewn; there

being not a single vestige of evidence for any such revelation.

But, as a matter of fact, such characteristics altogether are not found in all the books which even Protestants acknowledge as canonical; and so far as they are in these, they are not in them alone. How, for instance, without presupposing inspiration, would the presence or absence of such characteristics shew with certainty the Second and Third Epistles of St. John, or the Epistles of St. Paul to Titus and Philemon, to be inspired, and at the same time shew with equal certainty the wonderful Epistles of St. Ignatius or St. Polycarp to be not inspired?

It is evident, therefore, that in this way it cannot be known that the books which the Protestants have themselves retained in their canon are *all* of them inspired, and that *they alone* are inspired.

It is, however, in this sense only that we object to such characteristics being adduced or regarded as evidence—namely, as intrinsic criteria of Inspiration. We have no wish to underrate, and we are very far from being insensible to their value as additional evidence. Catholic apologists, in controversy with unbelievers, have frequently appealed to the sanctity, sublimity, and purity of the doctrine contained in the Sacred Scriptures, as compared with the circumstances of the time at which they were written, and with the character,

antecedents, and surroundings of their writers. In so doing they have, however, generally been treating rather of the revelation of the doctrine contained in the books, than of the inspiration of the books which contain it; and even then they have adduced such characteristics more as negative than as positive proofs—to show that there was nothing in the doctrine itself repugnant to the fact of its revelation. Further, they did not rely on these as the principal motives, and still less as the only motives of credibility. Such considerations were useful in the way of the removal of prejudices and of other hindrances to a right understanding and appreciation of the demonstration from extrinsic testimony. So St. Augustine, who habitually proves the divinity and inspiration of the Sacred Books from tradition, nevertheless appeals to the unity of the doctrine of the sacred writers, as opposed to the dissensions and contradictions of the philosophers. Nay, the Church herself, in her examination into her tradition as to inspired books, has not lost sight of such intrinsic characteristics as the consent of their doctrine with, and their similarity to, other books whose inspiration was undoubted. Especially has she had regard to the *sense* of the Christian people—that is, to the implicit or unexpressed belief of the aggregate of Christians—as one of the criteria leading to a knowledge of the

Apostolic tradition. But this consentient *sense* of the Catholic world is in no way to be confounded with the *gustus*, or *savour* and *relish* of Luther, who admitted or repudiated certain books, according as they were to his relish, or as in his own private judgment they seemed to him to savour of agreement with or divergence from his own preconceived system of doctrine.

Finally, taking such intrinsic criteria singly, the argument is still more evidently baseless.

As to the *historical* argument from the miracles and prophecies related in the Sacred Scriptures, they were never intended to prove the doctrine of inspiration. If they had been so intended, there would have been required a previous divine testimony as to such inspiration, which testimony they would have then confirmed. Even then there would have remained the whole question as to how that testimony was preserved, and as to how it had reached us.

The *dogmatic* and *empirical* arguments, even granting all that their advocates demand, could at most prove that in certain parts the Sacred Books contained revealed doctrine. Even then, there would be required a farther proof of the veracity and infallibility of the writers.

As to the *æsthetic* argument, it could prove no more than that the doctrines revealed, or otherwise known, had been expressed in fitting and

adequate terms and language. That this could not have been effected otherwise than by inspiration is neither evident nor demonstrable, and is a begging of the whole question.

Intrinsic arguments being inadequate to prove the inspiration of the Sacred Books, it remains that it should be proved by extrinsic testimony.

Inspiration is a supernatural psychological fact in the mind of man. As such, and like all other internal facts, it is known only to God, its efficient cause, and to the being who is its subject—the person inspired. Not even to him, as we have seen, is it necessarily known. (See page 45.)

The inspiration of a book, therefore, cannot be known to any other than its writer, save either from its external result, or from a testimony worthy of credit. But the external result of inspiration is none other than writing, and the book written; and in these, as has been shewn, there is no intrinsic note which necessitates inspiration as a cause. Hence there only remains as a criterion, such a testimony as should induce or compel belief, or as a means whereby we may ascertain the fact of the inspiration of any book, supposing that this ought to be known to others besides its writer. That it ought, and must necessarily be so known, is manifest; for otherwise the Sacred Scriptures would fail of their designed effect, and they would have been written in vain.

Now, such a testimony is either merely human, or it is divine. If it is merely human, then necessarily, in the series of witnesses, the first witness, and he is that witness on whom the authority of all the others who follow him depends, is the inspired writer himself. To him only immediately, and to the others not save from his testimony, can the fact of inspiration be known.

In such a case, as in every other case of an internal supernatural fact, there is the difficulty of the possibility, nay, the facility of deception or illusion in the witness; and the further difficulty of others being convinced with certainty of the absence of such deception or illusion. In any case, such testimony would generate merely a human and fallible, and not a divine and infallible faith or belief.

But if the fact of inspiration be believed with merely a human and so fallible faith, with the same faith and with no higher can it be believed that all contained in the books supposed to be inspired has been revealed and proposed by God by means of inspiration. That which rests upon another belief as its foundation cannot be believed with a firmer faith than that foundation is believed in, upon which it rests. The strength of a chain is that of its weakest link; and water cannot rise above the level of its source.

Now, the Sacred Scriptures are received, as they must be received, by the Universal Church, or by all Christians, as inspired, in such wise as that the truths contained in them are believed with *divine* and not merely with human, even the highest of human, faith. It follows that the fact of the inspiration of a book—this fact being the reason why the contents of that book are to be believed, and are believed with *divine* faith—must itself be believed with divine faith, and so must rest upon a divine testimony.

That this is a necessary consequence is evident to the Protestants, that is, to all who reject the divine authority of the Catholic Church. Hence it is, that such of them as retain a belief in, and maintain the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, are driven to seek for other grounds of their belief. Their position necessitates their denial of an extrinsic divine testimony; their reason warns them to avoid dependence upon an extrinsic human testimony; and so they are compelled to fall back upon such intrinsic testimonies as we have referred to. These, as foundations for belief, we have shewn to be merely gratuitous assumptions, or sufficient, at most, to give ground for conjecture.

A divine extrinsic testimony is therefore necessary in order to an intelligent and reasonable belief, or to a divine faith such as becomes a rational being, in the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DIVINELY INSTITUTED MEANS FOR THE PRESERVATION AND PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE; AND THE PLACE HELD BY THE SACRED SCRIPTURES IN RELATION TO THIS MEANS.

THE Son of God made man, during His sojourn on earth among men, proved to them His divine mission and authority, and their consequent obligation of belief, by many irrefragable motives of credibility.

He proved it by His miracles. That these were intended as a proof of His divine mission and authority, and that they were an adequate proof, we have the testimony of His own words. When John the Baptist in his prison had heard of the words of Christ, and sent to Him two of his disciples saying, "Art Thou he that is to come, or look we for another?" Jesus answered, "Go and relate to John *what you have heard and seen;* the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them."

On another occasion, at the feast of the Dedication, when the Jews came round about Him as He walked in the temple in Solomon's Porch, and

said to Him, "How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense? If Thou be the Christ tell us plainly." Jesus answered them: "I speak to you, and you believe not; the *works* that I do in the name of my Father they *give testimony of me.*" Then they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy, because, as they said, Thou, being a man, makest thyself God. But Jesus answered them, "Do you say of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, *believe the works;* that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in the Father."

Again, to His disciples, in His discourse to them after the Last Supper, and referring to the unbelieving Jews, He said, "If I had not done among them the *works* that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

In like manner He spoke to the Eternal Father at the grave of Lazarus, before He raised him from the dead, when lifting up His eyes He said, "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me, and I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people who stand about, have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

To record the miracles of Jesus, as they were *signs* or demonstrations of His divinity—of the

divinity of His mission and legation, of the divinity of His authority and doctrine, and consequently, of the divinity of His Person, which in His doctrine He proclaimed—was the chief scope of the Gospel of St. John, as that Evangelist himself tells us—"Many other things also did Jesus, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name."

Another motive of credibility He proposed in the fulfilment of the prophecies uttered by Himself. When He foretold to His disciples on Mount Olivet the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, He said to them, "Behold, I have told it to you beforehand."

He foretold also the destruction and the restoration of that other temple of God, the Temple of His Body; and this He foretold as a sign. When He had driven the traffickers from the Temple, and the Jews asked Him, saying: What sign dost Thou shew unto us, seeing Thou dost these things?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up." "When therefore," says St. John, "He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and many believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had said."

On another occasion, He foretold the manner of His death. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth,

will draw all things to myself," and this, says the Evangelist, "He said, signifying what death He should die."

To His disciples, before He suffered, He foretold the details of His Passion, precisely as afterwards they occurred, His death, and His resurrection to life on the third day. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man; for He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again."

Finally, He foretold to them His own ascension, and the advent of the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father should send, and who should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said to them. "Now," said He, "I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass, you may believe."

Another motive of credibility in Jesus as divinely sent, and as therefore speaking with divine authority, was that power which He manifested of searching the hearts and reading the thoughts of men. When Nathanael said to Him, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." There was here a reference

to some circumstance so hidden that its manifestation served as sufficient ground for Nathanael's faith. Nathanael said, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel."

Again, when Jesus was at Jerusalem at the Pasch, upon the festival day, and many believed in His name, seeing His signs which He did, St. John tells us, that nevertheless He did not trust Himself unto them, for that "He knew all men, and because He needed not that any should give testimony of man, for He knew what was in man."

He saw the thoughts of the Scribes who said within themselves, "He blasphemeth; who is this that speaketh blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God alone?" when He had said to the man sick of the palsy, "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

He knew the thoughts of the Pharisees who said, "This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

He knew the thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees who watched if He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.

On that day when He healed the man who had a withered hand, when there entered a thought into His disciples, as to which of them should be the greater, St. Luke tells us that Jesus saw the thoughts of their heart.

When teaching in the Synagogue at Capharnaum the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament of

His own Body and Blood, and when many of His disciples hearing it said, "This is an hard saying, and who can hear it?" Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured, said to them, "Does this scandalise you? . . . . There are some of you that believe not," for He knew, says the Evangelist, "from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him." To the twelve He said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" meaning thereby Judas Iscariot the son of Simon. To the same apostles at the last supper, He said, "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me, shall lift up his heel against Me. At present I tell you, before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass, you may believe that I am He."

A farther motive of credibility was supplied in the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament in Him, and by the whole history of the preceding ages which found in Him its explanation; the Ancient Law being, as St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, a preparation and a pedagogue to lead men to Christ. "Do not think," said Jesus in His sermon on the mount, "that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

To the Pharisees on another occasion He said,

"The Law and the Prophets were until John; from that time the kingdom of God is preached."

To Peter in the garden He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and He will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" Now all was done, adds St. Matthew, "that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

The men in shining apparel, who appeared to the affrighted women at the sepulchre, said to them, "Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen. Remember how He spoke unto you, while He was yet in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again." And they remembered His words.

This same necessity He set before Cleophas and his companion when He upbraided them for the sadness of their discourse as they walked on their way to Emmaus, "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Himself."

When, again, He appeared to the Eleven as they were gathered together, and they, being troubled and affrighted, supposed that they saw a spirit, He

shewed them His hands and His feet, and, while they yet believed not and wondered for joy, He ate before them to make manifest the reality of His risen body, and said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me." Then He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day."

Both these testimonies to His divine character —the testimony of His own works and the testimony of the Scriptures of the Old Testament—He adduces in His discourse to the Jews, who persecuted Him because He had healed a man with an infirmity of eight and thirty years on the Sabbath day. "I have a greater testimony," said He, "than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given Me to perfect, the works themselves, which I do, give testimony of Me that the Father hath sent Me. . . . Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting, and the same are they that give testimony of Me. . . . Think not that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust; for if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also, for he *wrote*

of Me; but if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Another motive of credibility in the divinity of Jesus, and in the truth of His doctrine that He was the Christ the Son of the Living God—the voice of the Eternal Father heard from heaven—is adduced by St. Peter in his Second Epistle, "We have not followed," says he, "cunningly-devised fables, when we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; but having been made eye-witnesses of His majesty, for He received from God the Father honour and glory, this voice coming down to Him from the excellent glory, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I have pleased Myself, hear ye Him;" and this voice we heard brought from heaven, when we were with Him in the holy Mount." The apostle refers to the day of the transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount Thabor, when, with James and John, he heard not only the voice from heaven, but the testimony of the prophets, of the living and the dead, of Elias and Moses, who appeared in majesty, and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem.

Nor was it once only that the Eternal Father gave testimony, by an audible voice from heaven, that Jesus was His only begotten and well-beloved Son. On that day when He was baptized by John in Jordan, and when He was come up out of the water, and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as

a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Again, at the close of His public ministry, and but a few days before He suffered, and after He had announced to His disciples that His hour was come, Jesus, lifting up His voice to the Eternal Father, said, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." Then came a voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The multitude that stood by hearing it said that it thundered. Others said, "An angel spoke to Him." Jesus said, "This voice came, not because of Me, but for your sakes."

Finally, we have that motive of credibility in the divinity, mission, and authority of Jesus, which is the confirmation and, as it were, the compendium of all the rest,—His resurrection from the dead, the reality of which He proved and put beyond question by so many appearances after He was risen again. "I delivered unto you first of all," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "that gospel which I also received: How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen by Cephas; and after that, by the Eleven; then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom

many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep; after that, He was seen by James; then by all the apostles; and, last of all, He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time, for I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."

Having thus made manifest and proved His divine mission and authority by such irrefragable motives of credibility,—by His miracles, by the fulfilment of the prophecies uttered by Himself, as well as of those contained in the ancient Scriptures, and by the various other testimonies to which we have referred, all culminating in the crowning testimony of His resurrection from the dead,—Jesus exacted for all and each of His doctrines, precepts, and ordinances, an entire faith and absolute obedience, and this under pain of eternal damnation.

Moreover, He selected an economy in order to the initiation of the human race in His doctrine, and in order to establish that doctrine and religion so as that it should endure for ever.

This He chose to accomplish, not by committing His doctrine and precepts to a written book, from which each individual might for himself draw and derive his own faith and religion. He not only, by His teaching and preaching, constituted certain men as His disciples, but from the number of those disciples He selected some who were also to be teachers and masters, and to whom, in order to

this end, He communicated His own authority. Of these apostles,—that is, of the men invested by Him with His own mission,—and of the faithful under them, He constituted a Church, subject to Himself, and united to Him as to its Head. In this Church He stored, as in a treasure-house, all those truths which He was sent by the Eternal Father and came to reveal and proclaim to the human race.

The apostles, then, were that authentic or authoritative Book which Jesus Christ Himself wrote,—a Book "written, not with ink, but by the Holy Ghost." "They did not," says St. Chrysostom, "come down from the mountain bearing tablets of stone in their hands, as did Moses; but bearing in their minds the Holy Ghost, and ministering a treasure and fountain of doctrines and of graces, they having themselves become, by Divine grace, living books and codes of law."

As therefore Christ, the Son of God, during His mortal life, by His own divine authority, revealed divine truths and delivered divine ordinances, so did He appoint that His apostles should, after His departure from the earth, propagate in all nations the Gospel which they had received from Him, by teaching and preaching it with His authority as His ambassadors. They were to be witnesses to Him unto the ends of the earth. They were to bear His name before Gentiles and kings. They were to preach penance to all nations.

They were sent, as He was sent, invested by Him with that divine mission which He had Himself received from the Eternal Father.

In order to their fulfilment of this their function of teaching and ruling, He sent to them, as He had promised, the Spirit of Truth, who should teach them all things that were to be revealed, should bring to their remembrance all things that He Himself had taught them, and should lead them unto all truth. He promised, moreover, that He would Himself be with them in their teaching all days, even to the consummation of the world.

It followed, and the consequence was set forward by Himself, that whoso heard and received His apostles should, by so doing, hear and receive Christ Himself, inasmuch as their doctrine and their authority was identified with His.

This manner of preaching the Gospel and propagating the Church, instituted and prescribed by their Divine Master, we see carried into effect by His apostles.

The office and authority of ambassadors of Christ the apostles expressly claim.

St. Paul says, writing to the Romans, "By our Lord Jesus Christ we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith in all nations for His name."

Again, in the same Epistle, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? or how shall they believe Him, of whom they have

not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent? Faith then cometh by hearing; and hearing by the Word of Christ."

To the Corinthians he writes, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. To us God hath revealed by His Spirit. We have received the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God, which things also we speak. We have the mind of Christ. We are God's coadjutors. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."

In his Second Epistle to the same Corinthians, he says, "Our sufficiency is from God, who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit." And again, "God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation. For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us."

To Timothy he speaks of sound doctrine, which is according to the Gospel of the glory of the Blessed God, "which Gospel," says he, "hath been committed to my trust."

This, their divine authority, moreover, the apostles confirmed, after the manner of their Divine Master, by signs and wonders, the seals, as it were, of their doctrine.

We read that after His ascension into heaven

"they, going forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed." "The signs of my apostle ship," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "have been wrought on you, in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds." To the Thessalonians also he writes, "Our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost." And again, to the Hebrews, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which, having begun to be declared by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness by signs and wonders and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will."

To this their doctrine the apostles exacted entire faith and absolute obedience, as to doctrine which was not their own, but which was the Word of God.

St. Paul exhorted the Romans, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrines which you have learned, and to avoid them."

Still more strongly to the Galatians he writes, "I wonder that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel which is not another; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be ana-

thema. As we said before, so now I say again, if any one preach to you a gospel beside that which you have received, let him be anathema. For I give you to understand, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me, is not according to man; for neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

To Timothy, his dearly beloved son in Christ, he writes, "In the Gospel I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles. Hold the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and in the love which is in Christ Jesus. Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us. Thou hast fully known my doctrine. Continue thou in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee."

Such was the manner in which their divine commission was understood by those apostles to whom Jesus said, "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth; going therefore teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

To this divine authority vested in the apostles there corresponded as its correlative in those who believed, the *obedience of faith*—an obedience not of free choice, but necessary, and that under pain of eternal damnation. When the apostles

received their divine commission, "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," Jesus added, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."

It is true that the obedience of faith is paid to an authority none other than that of God Himself as revealing, as St. Paul says to the Thessalonians, "When you had received of us the Word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed the Word of God."

But it is also true that the immediate authority of God as revealer is,—according to the disposition of His providence and the positive institution of Jesus Christ,—made manifest and applied to each and all, by means of the divinely bestowed and divinely demonstrated authority of the ambassadors of God. They are sent, that through them the divine utterance, and, this supposed, the truths revealed, and the legitimate sense of those truths may be received.

The obedience of faith, therefore, relates not only to the authority of God,—regarded by itself and immediately, which authority is the motive of faith, or, as theologians say, its *formal object*, —but it relates also to the authority of the ambassadors of God, through which authority both the formal and the material object of faith is applied.

In this sense St. Paul writes to the Romans, "By

Jesus Christ we have received grace and apostleship *for obedience to the faith* in all nations for His name;" that is to say, "We have received the apostolate that we may *announce* the faith, and that by the authority of our apostolate we may *exact the obedience of faith* in all nations for His name, to wit, that by reason of His authority and name men may render the obedience of faith."

Again, in the same Epistle, "I dare not to speak of any of those things which Christ worketh not by me, for the *obedience* of the Gentiles, by word and deed."

To the Corinthians he speaks of the weapons of the apostolic warfare as not carnal, but mighty to God unto the destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and *bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ*, and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience.

It is, then, clearly manifest from what we have seen of the nature of Christianity, as apparent from its commencement and in its institution, that the personal authority of the apostles, as teachers and rulers, on the one hand,—and the corresponding subjection, obedience, and duty of receiving, by means of them, and from them the faith and its explanation, on the other hand,—is something *not extrinsic* to the Christian religion and economy, or something *accidentally super-*

added under certain variable circumstances, but that it is something *intrinsic*, and an *essential property* of the economy instituted by Christ.

This divinely instituted relation between authority and the obedience of faith, between the teachers and the taught, certainly does not exclude the committing of the divine doctrine to written books. Such books would be most valuable *aids* and *instruments* of doctrine, useful both to teachers and to taught.

But it still remains true that the *personal authority of teachers* is to be regarded as the *fundamental* and *intrinsic institution* of Jesus Christ; while that other aid or instrument of Scripture is, as it were, something *superadded* to this by a special providence of God.

Hence, while we find that fundamental institution clearly and over and over again set forth by Christ Himself, and declared by His apostles, we nowhere find any command to commit His doctrine to writing, given by Christ to His apostles, as something intrinsic to their apostolate; nor was it recognised as such by them. They all most certainly fulfilled the functions entrusted to them by Him, and yet they did not all write books. Much less did they suppose that the whole Christian doctrine was to be committed by them to writing.

Now, given this, that the economy of a personal and living authority on the one hand, with a cor-

responding obedience of faith on the other, is an essential of the Christian religion as instituted by its Divine Founder, it follows that such an economy is unchangeable. It cannot pass into an economy wholly diverse and exclusive of that personal and living authority, without an entire subversion of the divine institution, and of the intrinsic character of the Christian religion.

That certainly would be a different economy, and one essentially opposed to the economy instituted by Jesus Christ, in which the Scriptures should be held as the one fount of doctrine from which each one might draw independently and for himself, and as the one supreme *norm* or rule, according to which each one might judge what pertains, and what does not pertain, to the true doctrine and discipline of Christianity.

Moreover, as the principal organ for the first promulgation of the Christian faith was, as is clear from the example, from the teaching, and from the institution of Christ, a personal living authority, and not merely the instrument of Scripture; so also, from the same institution, does that personal living authority *remain* the essential and perpetual organ of preservation of the Christian faith. The mode of the preservation of Christianity is homogeneous with the mode of its origin.

CHAPTER V.

THAT THE LIVING AUTHORITY, DIVINELY INSTITUTED AS THE MEANS OF THE PROMULGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, WAS ALSO DIVINELY INTENDED TO BE THE PERPETUAL ORGAN OF ITS PRESERVATION AND PROPAGATION, — IS PROVED BY THE EXPRESS WORDS OF CHRIST HIMSELF.

In the preceding chapter we have seen, from the mode of the first revelation and promulgation of the Gospel, and from the intrinsic character of the apostolate, as it was divinely instituted, that a personal living authority with, on the part of its subjects, a correlative obedience of faith, is *essential* to the religious economy as instituted by Christ; and that, being essential, it is *unchangeable.* We have seen, also, that the organ both of promulgation and of preservation is the personal living authority of the ambassadors of God; and that the Sacred Scriptures are neither the *only* organ, nor are they the *principal* organ.

We shall now shew, from the express words of Jesus Christ Himself, that, in His institution of the apostolate as an authoritative organ in order to the first promulgation of His Gospel, there was also instituted by Him a *perpetual apostolic*

succession as the authoritative organ of *preservation* and *propagation* of the same Gospel.

In so doing, we shall consider, first, the institution of Christ; next, the carrying out into practice of the system which He instituted, as we find it in the books of the New Testament; and lastly, the differences between divine ambassadors in order to the *first preaching* of the faith, and divine ambassadors in order to the *custody* of the faith delivered by the apostles.

That the apostles were chosen and constituted divine ambassadors, and that there was promised to them the gift of infallibility in order to their clear understanding and faithful preaching of the whole revealed doctrine, and that they were invested with such an authority as had for its correlative the obedience of faith, we have abundant testimony.

In His discourse to His disciples after the Last Supper, Jesus said to them, "I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may *abide with you for ever*, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you; I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will *teach you all things*, and bring all things to your mind,

whatsoever I shall have said to you. When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear He shall speak, and the things that are to come He shall shew you. He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it to you."

Again, before His departure from them and His ascension into heaven, referring to His own supreme power in heaven and on earth, He commanded His apostles to make disciples of all nations; to initiate them by means of sacraments; and to teach them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded. "And behold!" said He, "*I am with you all days*, even to the consummation of the world."

He told them, moreover, as St. Luke narrates in his book of their Acts, that they should be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth. They were to be WITNESSES, not by knowledge merely, but *by authority* also, and by *office*. Hence, even those who had associated with Jesus and His apostles all the time, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when He was taken up into heaven, were not, therefore, *witnesses* in this sense. To be witnesses, as were the apostles, there was necessary a special ordination and assumption into the number of the

witnesses. "One of these," said St. Peter, at the election of Matthias, "must be *made a witness with us* of His resurrection."

But further, it is abundantly evident, from the words of Jesus Christ, whereby He promised and conferred upon His apostles their divine authority and infallibility, through the Holy Ghost, and through His own ever-abiding guardianship, that those words applied to them not only personally, but as they represented the perpetual series of their successors up to the end of the world.

They, personally, were not to remain upon earth and to fulfil their functions as His ambassadors, for in this, like the priests of the Old Law, "by reason of death they were not suffered to continue;" and, therefore, the words of Christ, and the mission, authority, and infallibility expressed, conveyed, and bestowed by those words, belong to the whole apostolic succession which, by these words, was instituted.

In pursuance of the intention of their Divine Master, and to carry into effect that which He had instituted, we find the apostles adding to their numbers, and substituting others, that they might be guardians with them, and teachers of the deposit which they received from them; and this, through the Holy Ghost, communicated to them, and abiding with them.

The ancients of the church at Ephesus, for

whom St. Paul sent to Miletus, he exhorted, saying, "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood." And when the day of his dissolution was at hand, he wrote to Timothy, his disciple and beloved son in the faith, and then Bishop of Ephesus, exhorting him in like manner, that he should be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of the good doctrine which he had attained unto. "Till I come," says he, in his First Epistle, "attend unto reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood. Meditate upon these things. Be wholly in these things, that thy profiting may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself, and to doctrine; be earnest in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. O Timothy, keep that which is *committed to thy trust*, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so-called; which some promising, have erred concerning the faith. I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. Hold the *form of sound words*, which thou hast *heard of me* in faith, and in the love which is in Christ Jesus. Keep the good

thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us."

Again, in like manner, we find the apostles not only substituting others to fill vacancies in the Apostolic College, and adding to their numbers, but commanding these their immediate successors themselves in their turn to substitute others in their own places, to carry on their work of preserving and propagating the divine deposit.

"The things," wrote St. Paul to Timothy, "which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, *the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also.*" To his disciple Titus the same apostle also writes, "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest *ordain priests in every city*, as I also appointed thee."

Moreover, even as the apostles were commanded by their Divine Master to teach until the consummation of the world, so did they also charge their successors to keep the commandments,—that is, to preserve the divine deposit *until the coming* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastors and doctors were given for the edifying of the Body of Christ, and they shall continue so long as that Body, which is His Church, is as yet incomplete in the appointed number of its members,—that is, to the end of the world and His second coming. To them, in their perpetual succession, passes the office of keeping,

and His grace that they may keep the divine deposit; and to them throughout the ages do the words of Christ and of His apostle apply.

"O Timothy, keep the deposit," cried the great apostle of the Gentiles. "And who," asks Vincent of Lerins, "is the Timothy of to-day, save either, generally, the Universal Church, or, specially, the whole body of prelates, who themselves possess, and who infuse into others, the entire knowledge of the divine worship?"

It remains that we should consider the difference between the gift of the Holy Ghost as it was in the apostles, and the gift of the same Spirit as it is in the apostolic succession. At first sight there appears to be a difficulty, or an apparent contradiction between this admitted difference and what we have said. For if the words of Jesus foretelling and promising His own presence all days to the consummation of the world, and the abiding of the Paraclete the Spirit of truth with men for ever, apply not only to the apostles personally, but to them in their succession,—that is, to the whole apostolic succession, of which they were the foundation and root,—why should not all the gifts and graces comprehended by these words, and all the operations of the Spirit of truth, belong equally to all the successors of the apostles as to the apostles themselves?

The difficulty, however, is but an apparent one,

and disappears when we consider the diversity of the respective functions of the apostles and their successors. According to the diversity of the functions entrusted to them, there would be a diversity of graces in order to the fulfilment of such functions; and therefore a corresponding diversity in the application of the words by which such graces were guaranteed.

We have to consider in the apostles personally three things:—

First, They received a revelation *immediately* from Christ or from the Holy Ghost; and they were constituted the authoritative organs of *new* revelations, whereby the whole divine revelation to the human race was perfected and completed.

Secondly, They were invested by Christ with their authority as pastors, doctors, and guardians of the faith, *each individually and singly* for the *Universal* Church.

Thirdly, To the apostles also—regarded not singly and individually, but collectively, and as a whole, all in one communion and unity, *as one college and corporate body*—there was given this authority, and there was intrusted the guardianship of the faith for the Universal Church.

This last gift could not, *in the apostles*, be separated from the first and second—that is, from their *immediate* reception of *new* revelations, of which they were the authoritative organs, and from their

authority as individuals, given *to each singly for the whole Church.* This gift was included in the other two, as the less is included in the greater. Taken by itself, however, it is separable; and so, the first and second ceasing, it might remain.

Now, of these three apostolic prerogatives, the first manifestly cannot, from the nature of the case, belong to their successors. They do not receive *new* revelations, and they do not receive their doctrine *immediately* from Jesus Christ or from the Holy Ghost, but mediately, through their predecessors in the apostolic succession. We find them commanded by the Apostle to remain in the doctrine which they had learned and received *from the apostles.*

Nor did the second prerogative—that of authority as pastors, doctors, and guardians of the faith, each singly and individually for the Universal Church—pass to the individual successors of the apostles, to whom, as succeeding the apostles, was committed the guardianship of the divine deposit. The authority and right of feeding was in the individual successors of the apostles restricted to single and particular churches; or, certainly not extended to the Universal Church. Thus the apostles constituted, and also commanded that bishops should be constituted, in particular cities. St. Peter we find exhorting the ancients, not that they should

each singly feed the whole flock of God, but "Feed," says he, "the flock of God *which is among you.*"

In almost similar words, St. Paul exhorts the ancients of the Church at Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, *wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops.*" Those last words are restrictive, in individual bishops, of that right which belongs to the bishops collectively and as a body, of ruling "the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood."

It remains, therefore, that there belongs to the lawful successors of the apostles, regarded in union and communion as one college and corporate body, that third prerogative of the apostles, which they, as one Apostolic College and body, in union with and in subordination to their one Head and Prince, and the centre of their unity, possessed; and that consequently the authority of ruling and feeding, in which this prerogative consists, does not belong to individual successors, save only with regard to their own particular flocks.

To the successors of the Prince of the Apostles, and to them alone, does there pass the power of ruling and authoritatively teaching the Universal Church. To them this belongs, because in Peter there was instituted not merely the apostolate, but that perpetual primacy which was to be the Living Rock and one foundation of the whole Catholic Church.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTINUANCE, AFTER THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE WRITTEN, OF THIS DIVINELY INSTITUTED ECONOMY, OR MEANS FOR THE PRESERVATION AND PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

We have seen in the preceding chapters that the apostolic succession—we mean thereby the apostles themselves along with their successors,—was instituted and invested with its divine authority by Christ Himself, the Founder, the Guardian, the Spouse and Head of His Church, in order to the preservation and propagation of His divine doctrine in its entirety.

We have seen that, in virtue of His express words and solemn promises, it was to be perpetual, even to the consummation of the world. Its authority and functions were not to be dependent on mutable circumstances or on human endowments, but on the ever-present guardianship of Christ, and on the ever-abiding of the Spirit of truth. It was instituted not as something accidental to Christianity, so as that, were it to

cease, Christianity might yet endure; but that, on the contrary, it was instituted as the foundation and root, as the principle and conserving cause of the characteristics essential to the Christian religion.

Such an institution is immutable of its nature. God cannot contradict Himself by changing an economy founded by Himself, under an express promise of its perpetuity and indefectibility, into another essentially diverse.

On any hypothesis, therefore, such an economy remains immutable; even on the hypothesis that the doctrine committed to the ambassadors of Christ for its guardianship and promulgation should in course of time be, either in whole or in part, consigned to writing, and comprehended in inspired books.

Nay, from the very nature of such a divinely instituted, ever-living organ, it follows that as the doctrine delivered by its preaching, so also the doctrine consigned to books, and those divine books themselves, would be under the guardianship, and subject to the authoritative interpretation of that ever-abiding organ of the apostolic succession.

This truth, sufficiently manifest from the essential character of the apostolic succession, becomes still further manifest when we consider the books of the New Testament.

Before these books existed, and before they were all collected into one canon, and read in all the churches, these churches certainly existed, constituted by the preaching and ordination of the apostles, according to the commandment and institution of Christ. In these churches bishops had been ordained by the imposition of the hands of the apostles or their successors; and to them had been committed the doctrine delivered by the apostles, as a deposit to be faithfully kept by the grace of the Holy Ghost communicated to them. On them also had been laid the injunction that they should, in the various cities and countries, institute and ordain to themselves successors invested with the same authority and sharing the same grace. In dependence on their authority as successors of the apostles and as ambassadors of God, from whom they should receive, and have preached and explained to them, the Christian doctrine and discipline, the faithful and all who were to be aggregated to the Church, lived by the obedience of faith.

This dependence was not that of disciples merely, on the acquired knowledge of scientific teachers, for the books did not as yet exist, from which each one might draw the doctrine for himself, and compare with, and test by means of it the oral doctrine of his teachers. It was dependence on a divine authority, which was at

once the foundation of the obedience of faith, and the principle of the unity of the Church.

And so when, by degrees, there were delivered to the various churches inspired books containing revealed doctrine, the constituted economy of the Church was certainly not thereby destroyed. These documents were intended to be used, and were used in accordance with that economy already and divinely instituted,—that is, they were to be preserved by the bishops as successors of the apostles and guardians of the divine deposit, and by them to be explained, should any doubt arise as to their meaning.

It is an historical fact, and a fact evident from the internal character of the books themselves, that they were written singly as occasion offered, to meet particular necessities, and so each with a particular scope. Many were directed immediately to individual churches or to individual persons, and in their mode of treatment were accommodated to particular and existing circumstances. No single one of the sacred writers had it in view to set forth in any one book a complete instruction in the doctrine, or discipline, or worship of the Christian religion.

Hence in no one of the Sacred Books is there to be found, in order and didactic connection after the manner of a catechism, the whole Christian

doctrine. In many of them most important articles of doctrine are either altogether omitted, or only passingly referred to, or are to be gathered by deduction, and that supposing such articles of doctrine to be already and otherwise known.

All this makes it most clearly manifest that in the writing of the Sacred Books, whether as a whole or as singly, it never was the intention of the Holy Ghost, and that it never entered into the minds of the apostles or other sacred writers, to *substitute* such books for the ministry of the pastors and authoritative teachers, whom Christ had commanded to teach all nations, even to the consummation of the world. It most certainly was never intended that, the economy of a living authority being abolished, each individual should thenceforth be no longer, as heretofore, taught by the authoritative ambassadors of God according to the institution of Christ, but should *teach himself from a written book!*

This would be evident even were it granted that the whole revealed doctrine had been consigned to such books; for the argument is not so much from the deficiency of the matter of doctrine as from the *mode* of teaching and explaining the doctrine.

Considering, then, the historical origin of the Sacred Books, and their intrinsic character, which corresponds to this origin, it is clear that the

comprehension of the whole revealed doctrine in such books is a merely gratuitous assertion.

No one of the sacred writers proposed this to himself in writing his own book; nor was there any agreement amongst all that each should contribute his share in order to the formation of one whole, which should be by itself a complete body of doctrine.

It is true that the Holy Ghost, who is the principal Author of the Sacred Scriptures, *might have* so arranged and directed all things as that an entire body of doctrine should be thus compiled, and that without the knowledge, and apart from the design of the sacred writers.

But of this there is no evidence; and no argument can be brought to prove it unless the question be begged, and it be supposed that God willed Scripture to be the one fount of revelation, or at least a complete codex, from which a knowledge might be derived of His entire revelation. Of such an idea there is not a trace, either in the words of Christ Himself or in those of His apostles, in their action, in the mode of writing of the sacred authors, in the character and scope of their books, or in the persuasion of Christian men up to at least the sixteenth century.

But further, not only is the divine and living authority of the Catholic Church supposed by the sacred books in the very manner of their con-

struction, inasmuch as they are addressed to Christians already instructed in the faith by means of oral preaching, and are directed, as it were, in aid and supplement of such preaching, by repeating, and sometimes by superadding, instruction, counsels, and admonitions, which would have been unintelligible, or at least not readily and rightly intelligible, if the Christian religion had not been already known; but the faithful are also expressly relegated to such preaching as to that which they have already received and learned, and are exhorted to remain therein.

St. Paul beseeches the Romans to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrines which they had learned, and to avoid them. He finishes an instruction to the Corinthians on matrimony with the words, "So in all Churches I teach."

His doctrine of the Eucharist in the same Epistle he prefaces with, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you."

Speaking of prophesying, he says, "As also I teach in all the churches of the saints."

His great dogmatic chapter on the Resurrection he begins with the words, "Now I make known unto you brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you."

In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians he says, "The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was preached among you by us, by me and Sylvanus and Timothy, and our preaching was not *It is*, and *It is not*, but *It is*,"—that is to say, it was not inconsequent or contradictory, but definite and consistent.

In still stronger terms to the Galatians,—in the Epistle which he wrote to deliver them from the false teachers who sought to bind on all Christians, and even on those converted from among the Gentiles, the obligations of the law of Moses,—the Apostle says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."

To the Philippians he writes, "The things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, these do ye."

To the Colossians,—"As therefore you have received Jesus Christ the Lord, walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and confirmed in the faith, as also you have learned."

To the Thessalonians,—"We pray and beseech you, brethren, in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more; for you know what precepts I have given to you by the Lord Jesus." And again, "God hath called you unto faith of the

truth by our Gospel; therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle."

It is manifest, therefore, that by the publication of inspired books, the divinely-instituted, perpetual, and ever-living authority of the apostolic succession was not abolished, interfered with, or disparaged. These books were given to it as a divine instrument of doctrine, themselves to be preserved and explained by that authority, as well as to serve as a means in order to the more efficacious preaching and the more effectual guardianship of the whole deposit of faith.

We may here notice a difficulty which is sometimes brought forward. It is argued that the authority of the organ of tradition, or the apostolic succession of which we have spoken, cannot be demonstrated from the testimony of Scripture, unless a knowledge of the authority and of the true sense of Scripture be supposed antecedently to, and independently of, the authority of the organ of tradition; and this inasmuch as to proceed otherwise would be to argue in a vicious circle—to prove the authority of the Scriptures from the testimony of the Church, and again the authority of the Church from the testimony of the Scriptures.

The difficulty arises from a confusion of thought as to the manner in which we use Scripture as a testimony to the authority of the Church.

The Scriptures may be regarded simply as *genuine* documents worthy of credit; or they may be further regarded as not only genuine and worthy of credit, but as *inspired.* That they are inspired we cannot know except from the testimony of the Church; and were we to prove the authority of the Church *from the Scriptures as inspired*, we should indeed be arguing in a vicious circle. But this is not the method of our argument. We suppose that the Gospels and other Scriptures are *genuine* documents—a fact which may be proved independently of the authority of the Church. We suppose also, from the genuineness of these documents, the truth of the Gospel narrative, and, from what we find therein recorded, we suppose the divine authority of Jesus Christ. Given this, His words and actions are to be regarded as divine and His doctrine as revealed, apart from any question as to the inspiration of the Scriptures, and assuming only their genuineness and veracity. We then prove the authority of the Church from His doctrine, which we thus know to be revealed, and from His words and actions, which we in like manner know to be divine. Having so proved the authority of the Church, we then, from the testimony of the Church, prove that the Sacred Scriptures are not only *genuine*, but *inspired* documents. Thus to argue is not to argue in a vicious circle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE IDEA OF TRADITION, AS IT IS DISTINGUISHED FROM SCRIPTURE; AND THE MUTUAL RELATIONS OF SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION.

THE word "tradition," in its most general sense, means, as its etymology implies, that which has been delivered. In its theological sense, it signifies a doctrine or ordinance transmitted from predecessors—a deposit received, and not excogitated or invented—something brought to one, and not brought forth by one.

Besides this, its general sense, it is used in various particular senses. These differ according to the mode in which the thing delivered has been preserved and is conveyed. There is, for instance, the distinction between divine traditions, apostolic traditions, and ecclesiastical traditions.

By *divine* traditions, we mean all such doctrines and precepts, institutions and ordinances, as have been immediately revealed or ordained by God Himself; although, in their promulgation, the ministry of men has intervened, as His legates, ambassadors, or representatives.

As to the divine traditions of the New Law, of which God was the Author, the first visible promulgator was either the God-Man Jesus Christ, or His apostles, as they were the subjects of the revelation and direction of God the Holy Ghost. In the former case, those divine traditions are called *Dominical* traditions; in the latter, they are called *Divino-apostolical* traditions.

This distinction is founded on no diversity of authority, nor does it imply any such diversity,—Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost being both Divine Persons, and so equally God. It is an accidental distinction, framed to denote diversity, not of origin, but of mode. It refers, not to the source of the traditions, but to the channel through which they flow from God to man. This distinction implies, also, as its foundation, the fact that the whole of the divine revelation of the New Law was not given by Jesus Christ during the days of His mortal sojourn, but that what He gave was supplemented and completed by God the Holy Ghost Whom, after His ascension, He sent down from the Father upon His apostles. Jesus told them, as St. John in his Gospel relates, that He had yet many things to say to them, but that they could not bear them then; and that, when the Divine Spirit of truth, the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, should come to them, He should teach them *all* truth; not only bringing to their minds

all things whatsoever He, Jesus, had said to them, but shewing them the things that were to come.

The second class of traditions consists of those which are called *Apostolic.* They are so called to distinguish them from *Divine* traditions. They are sometimes, also, called *simply apostolic*, in distinction from those traditions which are *divino-apostolic.*

To understand this distinction, we must have clearly before our minds the twofold office and function of the apostles.

The apostles were promulgators of the divine doctrines and institutions which they had received by revelation from one or other or from both of the Divine Persons,—God the Word incarnate, and God the Holy Ghost; and they were also pastors and rulers of the Church. In this latter capacity, in virtue of the authority derived from, and bestowed by Jesus Christ, it belonged to them to legislate for, and to establish the discipline of the Church, as they judged necessary or useful in order to its end,—the sanctification and salvation of the faithful.

Everything, therefore, which relates to doctrine was certainly revealed by God, if it can be shewn to have been delivered as such by the apostles. The proof of the one is the proof of the other. To prove apostolic tradition as to doctrine is to prove its divine revelation.

Doctrines and practices of divine tradition are,

therefore, immutable; and it belongs to the apostolic functions merely to teach and declare them.

Precepts and practices, on the other hand, which are *simply apostolic*, are subject to that perpetual apostolic power which resides in the successors of St. Peter. To the Apostolic See, therefore, it belongs not merely to declare them, but to modify, to dispense, and, if need be, to abrogate them.

It follows, also, that those things which are of *Divine* tradition cannot be diverse in diverse Churches; but as to matters which are of merely apostolic tradition, there is no reason which excludes diversity, and requires that they should be in all places and cases the same.

We have an instance of this in the diversity of discipline which obtained in the first ages with regard to the fixing of the Paschal season. The Churches of the West and the Churches of Asia kept Easter at different times; and both appealed to apostolic tradition in support of their respective customs. This diversity of custom presented no difficulty; nay, we find St. Irenæus, in his letter to St. Victor, the Roman Pontiff, speaking of the diversity as to the Lenten fast (and consequently as to the celebration of Easter) as commending the consent of the faith.

Not so as to the doctrine and practice of the Quartodecimans. They, following the heresy of the Ebionites, taught that the time and the ritual

observed by the Jews and prescribed by the law of Moses, was binding upon Christians. This was a question not of mere apostolic custom, but of divino-apostolic tradition. According to that tradition all the legal and typical rites were, after their fulfilment by Christ, the antitype, dead; and not only so, but, after sufficient propagation of the Gospel, deadly. After Christ had fulfilled the law of Moses, its ritual precepts were valueless, although they might be observed without sin; but if they were prescribed as binding on the consciences of Christians, they were not merely valueless, but positively mischievous. The Quartodeciman heresy was of the nature of the doctrines and practices condemned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians.

The third class of traditions consists of those which are called *Ecclesiastical.* These are true traditions, but date from post-apostolic times. They may be either universal, or the traditions of particular Churches. If universal, their origin, if it is not to be derived from the apostles, is undoubtedly derived from the supreme ecclesiastical authority which extends to the Universal Church.

Defect of universality is by no means a decisive argument for denying the origin of a tradition to be from the apostles or from the supreme ecclesiastical authority. But the universality of a

tradition is a certain argument, sufficient to prove either the one origin or the other.

It will prove the ecclesiastical origin of the tradition if its root can be traced to a period posterior to apostolic times; or if a post-apostolic origin is manifest either from the records of history or from the nature of the case. It will prove the apostolic origin of the tradition if no root can be traced, and if no reason can be shewn for a later origin.

This is held by St. Augustine as an axiomatic rule,—that what the Universal Church holds, and what, so held, cannot be traced to the institution of any Council, is to be held to be of apostolic authority.

Although, therefore, only divine traditions are in themselves and immediately the revealed word of God, and so the material object of the divine faity; even merely apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions have for their foundation that supernatural power and authority which is itself revealed, and is itself to be believed with divine faith.

Consequently, just as he who should deny dogmatic facts defined by the Church would, by such denial, deny also the revealed infallibility of the Church; so also he who should, for instance, reject the sacred ceremonies used in the administration of the sacraments and in the sacrifice of the mass, the use of the sign of the cross and of holy

water, and other traditions, partly apostolic and partly ecclesiastical, would, by such rejection deny the revealed apostolical and ecclesiastical authority and power, in virtue of which customs so intimately connected with religion exist.

In this sense it is that the Fathers sometimes speak of traditions which are either merely apostolical or ecclesiastical as *divine* traditions; inasmuch as their denial or rejection is an implicit denial of a divine tradition.

For this reason, also, the Catholic Church, in the profession of the Catholic faith exacted from converts, and commonly called the Creed of Pope Pius, requires them most firmly to admit and embrace the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the Church, and all the received and approved rites of the Church used in the solemn administration of the sacraments.

Finally, in distinguishing whether a tradition is divine or merely apostolic or ecclesiastical, if it is of such a nature as that it could not but have had God for its Author, it is certainly divine.

The doctrine or practice alleged must, in such case, be either a divine tradition or no real tradition at all. The efficacious signs of grace, or the sacraments of the New Law, fall within this category. That they are seven in number, and

that they are, as to their nature and effects, what the Church teaches them to be, is a divine tradition. So, also, as to the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady. This doctrine is now believed by all Catholics to be of divine tradition. Before its definition by the Sovereign Pontiff, all, both theologians and the faithful, who taught and believed the doctrine, believed it as of divine tradition. Those who denied it, did so not in doubt as to whether it was of divine or of merely apostolic or of ecclesiastical tradition, but in doubt as to whether it was sufficiently established that it was in reality of divine tradition. It is, of its nature, either a divine tradition or no tradition at all.

Between such Divine Traditions and the Sacred Scriptures the distinction is apparent. It is not a distinction in any way implying diversity of authority, since the source of authority is, in both cases, one and the same; and this necessarily so, the authority being divine. It is not even always a distinction as to subject-matter. The same subject-matter may be contained in both vehicles of transmission,—in the Sacred Scriptures as well as in the oral teaching or in the daily practice of the Church. In fact, in the widest sense, every truth revealed by God, and in any way transmitted to us, is a divine tradition, whatever may have been the mode of such transmission. In this sense, everything contained in the Sacred Scrip-

tures is also a Tradition; and we find the Fathers sometimes applying that term to doctrines contained in Scripture.

But there is another and a more restricted sense of tradition, and one so common that, when tradition is spoken of without further explanation, such sense is always presumed. It is assumed to denote a truth which has come to us through some means of transmission other than the Sacred Scriptures. We speak, therefore, of Tradition as distinguished from Scripture. Now what are the mutual relations of these two?

It is evident in the nature of things that the same homage of faith is due to infinite truth, wherever there is certain proof of the fact of a divine revelation, or wherever the Word of God has been sufficiently proposed, whether such proposition be made by means of Divine Scripture or in any other manner.

It is also evident that neither in the nature of things nor from the order of the divine providence, as that order is made manifest in the history of revelation, is it required as a condition in order to exacting the homage of faith that a truth to be believed should be consigned to writing or comprehended in the Sacred Scriptures.

This is not necessary in the nature of things, for the revelation itself which exists in the Scriptures is reduced to an immediate revelation, first

made, apart from the Scriptures, to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles.

Now, we have seen that as God rendered His first ambassadors worthy of belief by supplying adequate motives of credibility in order to the first promulgation of His revelation, so has He also ever since guaranteed, by adequate motives of credibility, the infallible testimony of His ambassadors, their successors, in order to the preservation and propagation of the same revelation. There is consequently the same obligation to believe those ambassadors who preserve and attest revealed truth now, whether they propose such truth by means of the Scriptures or apart from the Scriptures, as there was to believe the first ambassadors of God, who, certainly apart from Scripture, inasmuch as it did not yet exist, attested the revelation made immediately to themselves.

So far, therefore, as the nature of things is concerned, all that is necessary for God to do, in the event of His purpose to reveal and to demand faith in what He reveals, not only at the date of the revelation but throughout all future time, is first to render such revelation worthy of belief, and secondly, to establish some mode whereby that revelation should be preserved entire, and always equally worthy of belief, as the Word of God.

Should He choose Scripture as the means of preservation, then there must be provided throughout

all time sufficient motives of credibility that, in Scripture, is contained the uncorrupted and unalloyed Word of God. Should He choose the authority of witnesses as His ambassadors, and apart from Scripture, then there must in like manner be provided throughout all time sufficient motives of credibility that, by their testimony, is proposed the uncorrupted and unalloyed Word of God.

In either case, one and the same homage of faith would be due to the Word of God, whether written or not written; but in the one case, the authority of witnesses, whereby apart from Scripture, the Word of God is proposed as credible and to be believed, is intelligible; in the other, the authority of Scripture credible without witnesses can neither be known nor preserved.

Although, however, in the intrinsic nature of things it is not required that the Word to be believed should be a Word written, yet God might have chosen, in the providence of His revelation, never to propose a mediate revelation for belief, save as written. The idea of such a condition, without which God of His own free choice should not, in the present order of the human race, propose a revelation for belief, is *conceivable.* But if it is manifest, from the history of revelation, that the true religion revealed by God never existed without its containing certain revealed truths, not written, but transmitted by tradition alone; and

further, that even after the settlement of the canon of the Sacred Scriptures, it was ever the certain persuasion of the Christian society derived from the apostles that the economy of revelation remained the same,—we have proof positive that, according to the disposition of the divine providence, there is not required comprehension in Scripture in order that a doctrine should pertain to that Word of God which is to be believed.

It is historically certain that the people of God, from the origin of the human race up to the heresy of the sixteenth century, always retained in their belief and profession certain doctrines as divinely revealed which were not contained in the Scriptures.

From the beginning of the race up to the time of Moses, the primeval revelation concerning God as Creator and Sanctifier, concerning the divine worship and the divine law, concerning the life to come, concerning good and evil angels, and especially concerning the future Redeemer of mankind, was certainly preserved without any Scripture, at least among those who were ruled by the Spirit of God, and were therefore distinguished by the name of *sons of God* from the sons of men.

This primitive revelation was preserved among them partly by an ordinary ministry, through the succession of the patriarchs; partly by an extraordinary ministry, through the gift of the spirit of

prophecy. By this means, the divine revelation was in those days preserved, explained, and added to by God.

As to the patriarchs before the Deluge, we know but little. Still even in the scanty records which we do possess, we find mention of at least three men, Enos, Henoch, and Noe, who are spoken of as guardians of the divine religion and preachers of justice. We read of Enos, the son of Seth, that he began to call upon the name of the Lord, or, as it is in the Hebrew text, "then men began to call upon the name of the Lord"—words which are to be understood of a propagation of the public worship of God, or a preaching of the divine religion, since they certainly cannot be held to signify its first institution.

Henoch is said by St. Jude to have prophesied; and St. Peter speaks of Noe as a preacher of justice. Moreover, we know that the divine religion was preserved on earth up to the time of the Deluge, and this could have been only by means of tradition. The preservation of tradition, if we regard it even merely historically, was easy in those days, from the extraordinary length of human life.

The mode of tradition was doubtless the same then as afterwards in the patriarchal age after the Deluge, as we have it indicated to us by Moses in the Book of Genesis, where we read that the Lord said

of Abraham, "I know that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and do judgment and justice." Again, Moses himself, in the canticle which he spoke before his death in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel for the remembrance of the law, says, "Remember the days of old; think upon every generation. Ask thy father, and he will declare for thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

The same mode of tradition we find also outside the borders of Israel. We read in the Book of Job the words of his friend, "Inquire of the former generation, and search diligently into the memory of the fathers, and they shall teach thee."

From the time of Moses, and when certain divine books were already written, there was instituted by God Himself an ordinary ministry of exegetical tradition, and of authoritative interpretation in the priesthood. "The lips of the priest," said the Lord by Malachias, "shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel (or ambassador) of the Lord of hosts." Submission to the authority of this priesthood was prescribed under pain of death. "If thou perceive," was the commandment of Moses, "that there be among you a hard and doubtful matter in judgment between blood and blood, cause and cause, leprosy and leprosy; and thou see that the words of the judges within thy gates do vary; arise,

and go up to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, and thou shalt come to the priests of the Levitical race, and to the judges that shall be at that time; and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall shew thee the truth of the judgment. And thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say that preside in the place which the Lord shall choose, and what they shall teach thee according to His law; and thou shalt follow their sentence; neither shalt thou decline to the right hand, nor to the left hand. But he that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die."

The principle of tradition is set forth also in the Book of Psalms; as, for instance, "We have heard, O Lord, with our ears, our fathers have declared to us the work Thou hast wrought in their days, and in the days of old. How great things have we heard and known, and our fathers have told us; they have not been hidden from their children in another generation; declaring the praises of the Lord, and His power and His wonders which He hath done: and He set up a testimony in Jacob, and made a law in Israel. How great things He commanded our fathers, that they should make the same known to their children, that another generation might know them, that children should be born, and should rise up, and declare them to their children."

The son of Sirach says, also, in similar words, "Let not the discourse of the ancients escape thee, for they have learned of their fathers."

Besides this ordinary ministry of the priesthood, there was given also to the people of Israel an *extraordinary* ministry, in the succession of the prophets. The mission of the prophets was not only in order to the promulgation of new revelations, but in order also to the guardianship and explanation of the revelation and law already received.

By this twofold ministry of tradition as one whole, composed of the ordinary ministry of the priesthood, and the extraordinary ministry of the succession of the prophets, divine truths which had not been committed to writing were *preserved*, and truths but obscurely indicated in the Sacred Scriptures were *clearly taught*.

It is not improbable that of the many traditions referred by the Jews from the earliest times to Moses, and said to have been given to him along with the written law on the Mount Sinai, some were genuine.

But be this as it may, one thing is certain, that the doctrine as to the canon, the authority, and the divinity of the Sacred Books themselves was not transmitted save by tradition. This is self-evident; but it is further manifested by the distinction made by the Jews of books as to

which the tradition was more obscure. So Josephus, after enumerating the books written up to the time of Artaxerxes, according to the accustomed division of Law, Prophets and Psalms, says of later books, "These are not received with equal faith, *because there has not been an accurate succession of the prophets.*"

That the Church of Christ was constituted in its beginning, and received the doctrine of faith by means of the preaching of Christ and His apostles, while the consignation of doctrine to the Scriptures of the New Testament was of subsequent date, was accomplished but gradually, and this moreover after churches had been established far and wide, and therefore that the Primitive Church believed many things contained not in Scripture but only in Tradition, are facts which no Christian can deny.

It is clear, then, that up to the date of the death of the apostles, there never existed a revealed religion without its comprehending certain truths to be believed which were not consigned to any divine scriptures.

Therefore, if in the Christian religion after the age of the apostles there exist no revealed truths save such as are written, that is neither from any intrinsic necessity, nor would it be in accordance with the accustomed order of the Divine Providence as made manifest in the history of revelation. It would be a fact outside the order of that

providence whereby God from the beginning provided for the promulgation and preservation of His revelation. Nay, more, if we compare the idea and nature of the New Testament with that of the Old, such an hypothesis appears less congruous in the case of the New Testament, in which far more ample promises are made to the ever-living authority for the preaching of revealed doctrine than to the priesthood of the Old Law.

We need not, then, be surprised to find that the Church has, even after the death of the apostles, and after the completion of the Sacred Scriptures, ever speculatively held and practically acted upon the principle, not only that it is by no means necessary that a truth, in order to its being believed, should be contained in the Sacred Scriptures, but also that there are certain revealed truths to be believed which are not written.

A case in point is the baptism of infants, for which St. Augustine says that no more than a "conjecture" can be derived from Scripture.

He proves it from the principle that what the Universal Church holds, and the institution of which cannot be traced to any Council, is most rightly believed to have come from apostolic authority.

Another instance is that of the validity of baptism conferred by heretics.

But there cannot be a better example of tra-

ditions existing and preserved apart from the Sacred Scriptures, than the belief in the Sacred Scriptures themselves as the inspired and written Word of God.

The *genuineness* of the Sacred Books may be proved historically and critically, in the same way as the genuineness of other ancient documents, from merely historical tradition. This does not require the testimony of a religious and divine tradition such as that which we are considering. By *genuineness* we mean that the book was really the work of the author to whom it is attributed; or at least that it was written at the time and under the circumstances which those who found upon it allege.

The *integrity* of the Sacred Books, at least in the main, may be proved in the same manner.

Their *veracity* follows, in most instances, when the genuineness has been proved; and from the veracity there follows in some cases, the *divinity of the doctrine.*

From the *veracity*, for example, of the Gospels, there is manifest the divinity of the Person, and, consequently, the divinity of the doctrine and promises of Christ which are there recorded. From this divinity of the doctrine and promises of Christ there follows the divinity, in the main at least, of the doctrine of the apostles, as contained in their Epistles.

But the *veracity*, and, much more, the *divinity of the doctrine* of all and every one of the passages in the Sacred Scriptures, cannot be demonstrated save from the inspiration of those documents.

This *inspiration* cannot be known with certainty save on divine testimony.

As to this testimony, although with regard to the inspiration of *some* of the books (such as those of the Old Testament contained in the Jewish canon), it may be preserved to us in apostolic Scripture; yet, with regard to the books *as one whole*, which are to be believed in as inspired, it is transmitted to us by tradition alone. And this tradition of a divine testimony is not merely historical, but is the tradition of a ministry divinely instituted and divinely preserved.

We see, then, how far our knowledge as to the Sacred Scriptures depends, and how far it does not depend, on tradition, taking tradition, in the Christian sense, as the tradition of the Catholic Church, the divinely-appointed means for the preservation and propagation of revealed doctrine.

The genuineness, integrity, and veracity of the Sacred Books, and the divinity of the doctrine contained in them, may, even prescinding from the authoritative tradition, be demonstrated historically and critically.

But this method of demonstration does not suffice for *all the texts* of Scripture, which we

must believe to possess these properties. It does not suffice in the case of *all persons* who are bound to believe, since the greater number of men are incapable of perceiving such critical and historical demonstrations. It does, not moreover, suffice for the *state of controversy;* so as that, a controversy having arisen, it might be terminated historically and critically to the satisfaction of all.

In like manner, the inspiration of the Sacred Books, and the consequently absolute veracity and divinity of the doctrine contained in them, may also be demonstrated by the testimony of apostolic Scripture; but subject to the same threefold limitation, namely, not as to *all the books*, not sufficiently for *all persons*, and this especially in the case of *controversy*.

An instance specially in point is that of the testimony of St. Peter to the Epistles of St. Paul.

In his Second Epistle St. Peter connumerates these Epistles with the other Scriptures. He says, "Our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you, as also in *all his Epistles*, speaking in them of these things; in which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also *the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction." He here connumerates with the other Scriptures all the Epistles of St. Paul written up to that date, that is, all save his Second Epistle to Timothy. As, there-

fore, we know the Scriptures of the Old Testament to have been inspired, so we might argue, from this connumeration with them, the inspiration of these Epistles. But this testimony of the Prince of the Apostles would certainly not apply to *all* the books of the New Testament; and for this simple reason that all were not yet written. St. Peter wrote his Second Epistle a little before his martyrdom, about the year 66 or 67, while the writings of St. John—his Gospel, his Epistles and his Apocalypse—did not appear for twenty years after.

Moreover, this Epistle of St. Peter is one of those very books the genuineness and apostolic origin of which cannot be proved with certainty and beyond controversy, save by means of the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Scientific demonstration, such as we have spoken of, is doubtless useful, and sometimes necessary for controversial purposes; but it certainly is not the means ordained by Christ Himself in order to the preservation of the faith and of belief in the Scriptures as instruments of the faith. As Christ and the Holy Ghost by means of the apostles delivered the entire revealed doctrine, so did they also deliver these instruments of that doctrine, along with the revelation of their inspiration, to the apostolic succession, that by means of it the truths as to their genuineness, integrity, and inspiration might be preserved and proclaimed. As

to that succession, under the assistance and direction of the Spirit of truth, belongs the guardianship, explanation, and definition of the deposit of faith, so do all things else belong which are necessary thereunto.

According, therefore, to the economy instituted by Christ, the root and source of our knowledge with regard to the Sacred Scriptures is the tradition and authoritative voice of the Catholic Church. This is the one and only universal principle of knowledge, accommodated to *all persons*, with regard to *all the books* and *all their parts*, and as a means to end *all controversies*.

In opposition to what we have said as to the relation between the Sacred Scriptures and the tradition of the Catholic Church, it may be argued that the Fathers frequently assert the plenitude and sufficiency of the Scriptures to demonstrate revealed doctrines.

But this we equally with the Fathers assert; for there is a sense in which this is true.

The Sacred Scriptures clearly contain the revelation of a ministry divinely instituted in order to the preservation and explanation of the entire doctrine of faith. If any one does not see this to be clearly contained in the Scriptures, he ought to maintain that *no* doctrines, rather than that all doctrines, are clearly therein contained.

In this sense, therefore, may be asserted, and

sometimes is asserted by the Fathers, the sufficiency of Scripture to demonstrate all doctrines. Given the divine authority of Scripture, it undeniably demonstrates the authority of the Catholic Church, as the directive or formal principle whereby we arrive at a knowledge of all the truths of faith, and whereby all controversies may be ended. In other words, the Scriptures clearly contain this principle,—that the apostolic succession has been divinely instituted as the guardian and teacher of the whole doctrine of revelation. This principle implicitly contains in itself all revealed doctrines. All doctrines, therefore, are in this sense comprehended in the Sacred Scriptures which are in this way sufficient for their demonstration.

In the same sense, the Fathers sometimes speak of truths, which they themselves confess to have been preserved by tradition alone, as if they rested on the authority of Scripture.

So St. Augustine speaks of the validity of baptism conferred by heretics. He says that certainly not an example of this can be brought from the canonical Scriptures; and that yet even as to this we are holding a truth of those Scriptures, since we act in accordance with the teaching of the Universal Church, which Church the Scriptures themselves commend to us.

The Fathers never assert the sufficiency of the

Sacred Scriptures *in opposition to* tradition, or *apart from* that divine authority in whose hands those Scriptures are an instrument of doctrine.

Even supposing that all revealed doctrines were contained in the Scriptures, still such is their relation to that divine authority, that if by its definition should be determined the sense of a particular passage, such definition would be an *absolute* rule of its interpretation.

The common doctrine of the Church, moreover, is, besides this, a *negative* rule of interpretation; that is to say, no interpretation of any passage can possibly be a true one which is at variance with the analogy of the faith declared by the Catholic Church. And further, as to many passages it affords a *directive* rule, aiding *positively* towards a fuller and more certain understanding of their true sense and meaning.

The Fathers, in all their magnificent eulogiums of the Sacred Scriptures, do not say one word which we should not ourselves say. They nowhere so magnify them as to disparage the divine teaching authority of the Catholic Church, whose instrument these Scriptures are, and which is the infallible and the only adequate principle of their interpretation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NATURE AND VALUE OF CERTAIN CRITERIA OF DIVINITY OF DOCTRINE: THE CONSENT OF THE FAITHFUL; THE DOCTRINE OF THE FATHERS; THE TEACHING OF THE SCHOOLS.

AMONG the criteria of divine tradition, and so among the criteria of the divinity of any particular doctrine, is certainly to be reckoned the consentient belief of the faithful in that doctrine as of divine faith.

The faithful, as constituting one body, are preserved ever free from error, both in their belief and in its profession, by the Holy Ghost.

They are so preserved, not by means merely of His immediate operation upon individuals, and apart from any visible ministry, but by means of that ever-living, visible, and divine authority which, as we have seen, Jesus of Nazareth established upon the earth, to endure throughout all time, and until His second coming.

This freedom of the faithful from all error in matters of faith is evident as the natural and

necessary result of that mutual relation between them on the one hand, and their pastors and authoritative teachers on the other, which relation Jesus Christ constituted, and the permanence of which He guaranteed.

To effect the preservation of that deposit of faith which He Himself was sent by the Eternal Father and came to reveal, and its possession by the faithful in its entirety, was the end for which He instituted this divine teaching authority. In order to this end, all the special graces which He promised and bestowed upon that authority were by Him intended. A corresponding obedience of faith, and profession of faith on the part of the faithful, was the divine correlative of such a divine authority. It was the scope of its institution, the effect of its existence. Consequently, the divine teaching authority being indefectible and infallible, the faithful subject to it would share its infallibility. Their infallibility as a flock would be the result of the infallibility of their pastors. The infallibility of their belief as disciples follows necessarily and as a natural consequence from the infallibility of their authoritative teachers. Hence the *Ecclesia discens*, or the body of the faithful as disciples, possesses a *passive infallibility*, as theologians call it, in contradistinction from, and as the correlative of, the *active infallibility* of the *Ecclesia docens*, or the body of their teachers, in

union with and in subordination to their divinely constituted head, the Roman Pontiff.

This connection of the divine faith of the faithful, as a result and effect, with the divine teaching of the living authority instituted by Christ, and existing as the condition and extrinsic and ministerial cause of that faith, is expressed by the *sorites* of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. There we have—first, saving profession of faith and invocation of the name of the Lord; secondly, faith; thirdly, the hearing of faith; fourthly, preaching; fifthly, the divine mission of the apostles and their successors; and finally, the revealed Word of God.

"What saith the Scripture?" writes the Apostle. "The Word is near thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; this is the *Word of faith* which we preach; . . . for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not *believed?* or how shall they believe Him of whom they have not *heard?* and how shall they hear without a *preacher?* and how can they preach unless they be *sent?* . . . Faith then cometh by hearing, and hearing by the *Word of Christ.*"

The nations were to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded; but this on the authority of those whom He sent to teach them, and with whom He promised to be all days.

In that prayer which Jesus made to the Eternal

Father before He suffered—a prayer which could not fail of its effect—after declaring that the words which the Father had given Him *He had given to His disciples*, and they had received them and had kept them; and that as the Father had sent Him into the world, so had He also *sent them* into the world,—He prays that they all may be one. "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*" And not for His disciples only did He pray that they should be one, but for those also who, *through this word*, should *believe* in Him.

The unity of His apostles was to be a clear and convincing sign to the world of the divinity of His own mission; the unity of the faithful was to be a result of their belief in Him on the divine authority of His apostles.

So St. Paul, also, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of *one Body* and *one Spirit*, as they were called in one hope of their vocation. He declares that as there is *one Lord*, so is there *one faith* and one baptism. And in order to the effecting and preserving of this unity, he adds that Christ Himself instituted certain offices—some extraordinary, in order to the first revelation of the faith, and others ordinary, in order to its perpetual preservation and propagation. "Some," says he, "He gave to be apostles, and some prophets, and others

evangelists, and others pastors and teachers, for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, unto the edification (or building up) of the Body of Christ (that is, the completed number of the redeemed), till we all meet in the *unity of faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ; that we may not now be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but, performing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him Who is the Head, Christ; from Whom the whole Body, compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body."

The Spirit of truth, therefore, is present to the whole company of the faithful, preventing them from understanding or believing otherwise than as He Himself taught by the apostles. But this He does not immediately, or by His action on individuals, but by means of a visible ministry of pastors and teachers.

The Spirit of truth is present to these pastors, as they are one body, in communion one with another, and all in subordination to one visible head. As guiding them unto all truth, He is the immediate principle of the preservation of the Catholic understanding of revealed truth; and, by

means of their ministry, as by an external grace, wherewith is connected the internal grace of His holy unction, the same Spirit of truth is the principle whereby is effected and infallibly preserved the knowledge of the faith in the flock, united with and subject to its pastors.

The divine promises, therefore, concerning the functions and graces proper to the pastors of the flock, and especially those concerning their function and grace of infallible teaching, refer *immediately* to the apostles and to their successors, as to their *subject*. *Mediately*, and as to their *end*, they refer to the faithful; inasmuch as those promises were made and have been fulfilled in order to the advantage of the whole Church.

Hence we find, in certain passages of the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Ghost, as He is the principle of internal grace and unction in order to believing the Word of God, and to keeping the commandments of God proclaimed by the external, visible, divine teaching authority, promised indiscriminately to the faithful, and spoken of as dividing to each one severally of His graces as He wills.

Such passages are not to be taken *as excluding* the external grace of authoritative teaching, but *as supposing* it. Take, for instance, the words of St. John in his First Epistle: "Even now are there many antichrists; . . . they went out from us, but they were not of us. . . . But *you have an unction*

from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you as to such as know not the truth, but as to such as know it. . . . Let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you. . . . These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you. And *the unction which you have received from Him, let it abide in you. And you have no need that any one should teach you; but as His unction teacheth you concerning all things,* and it is truth and is not a lie, *and as it hath taught you, abide in Him.*"

He Who teaches is Christ Himself. He teaches in two ways—by the unction of His internal grace; and by the proposition of His external Word, through the ministry of those whom He has constituted His ambassadors. Among these was St. John himself, who certainly wrote both his Gospel and his Epistles in order that, by means of them, he might teach. Hence, in this same passage we find him conjoining the external ministry of teaching with the internal grace in virtue of which that teaching is received, embraced, and held fast. "Let that," says he, "which you have *heard from the beginning* abide in you;" and again, in the opening of the same Epistle, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, *we bear witness of and declare unto you.*" That is to say, external teaching being supposed, the faithful have an

unction from the Holy One, and are taught and know all things; the *all things* being all those which they had heard from the beginning, and in the belief of which they are exhorted to persevere.

Hence, St. John wrote both his Epistle and his Gospel as to men who already knew the truth; but he wrote it also in order to teach them, and, as it were, in aid of his preaching. The teachers by whom the faithful were not to be taught were men who taught things new and strange, and contrary to those things which they, the faithful, had heard from the beginning. Such teachers He commanded them to avoid and reject, in order that they might preserve that unction which they had received through internal grace along with the external preaching of the apostles.

In the same sense are to be understood those words of the prophet Isaias, in that chapter where, speaking of the Gentiles who, barren before the incarnation, were to increase and multiply the children of God in the Church of Christ, he says, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." These words our Divine Lord quoted in His discourse at Capharnaum, and explained as denoting the necessity of internal grace in conjunction with external teaching, and that even when the latter proceeded from His own divine lips: "No man can come to Me except the Father Who hath sent Me draw him. . . . It is written in the Prophets, And

they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me."

So St. Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, refers to the conjunction of his own teaching and that of his fellow-labourers in the Gospel with the internal grace necessary in order to the reception of that teaching, and in order to its fruitfulness in a living faith. "What is Apollo, and what is Paul?" says he. "The ministers of Him Whom you have believed. . . . I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. . . . We are God's coadjutors; you are God's husbandry, you are God's building."

It is clear, then, that the consent of the faithful to any doctrine, as to a doctrine divinely revealed, is an argument and criterion of its revelation and divine tradition, on the ground that the Spirit of truth preserves the whole body of the faithful ever free from all error adverse to faith, although He does so by means of a divinely authoritative teaching body.

That there cannot be a consentient belief of the whole Christian people in any error as if it were revealed truth, is evident from the fact of their relation towards their teachers; supposing the divine authority and infallible character of those teachers, which we have in previous chapters demonstrated.

Hence the Fathers are wont to assume the

absurdity of the hypothesis that the whole Christian people should have erred in matters of faith, as an irrefragable argument to make manifest the truth of ancient doctrine and the falsehood of modern error. If the novelties introduced by the heretics and contrary to antiquity are to be received, then, argues Vincent of Lerins *ex absurdo*, necessarily must it follow, that all the faithful of all ages, all the saints, all the chaste, all the continent, all the virgins, all clerics, levites, and priests, so many thousands of confessors, so many armies of martyrs, so great a number of such celebrated cities and peoples, so many islands, provinces, kings, kingdoms, and nations, the whole world, in fact, incorporated through the Catholic faith into Christ their Head, must have, throughout so many ages, been in ignorance, must have erred, blasphemed, and known not what to believe.

In a similar way argues Tertullian, St. Athanasius also, and St. Gregory Nazianzen.

Hence also we find the Supreme Pontiff, Pius IX., now happily reigning, by way of proximate preparation for his dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady, taking an account from the Bishops of the world as to what was the piety and devotion of the faithful under their charge towards the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.

In his Bull *Ineffabilis*, also, whereby he defines the doctrine, he numbers among the criteria of its divine tradition the singular concord of the Catholic Bishops and their faithful.

It need scarcely be said that the consent of the Christian people must be clear and certain, if it is to be an irrefragable argument, a criterion of the divine tradition of a doctrine.

If the consent is not clear, it still may and ought to have some weight, in proportion to its character; but it will not of itself suffice as a certain ground of judgment.

It is manifest, moreover, that such consent cannot be appealed to, save as to matters either of explicit knowledge by the faithful, or as to matters which are included in and supposed by their public and constant practice and custom.

There could be no demonstration of their consent as to more subtle doctrines, which are believed in by the multitude with only an implicit faith. In matters, however, which lie within the reach of their explicit understanding and belief, the argument from the universality of such belief is irrefragable, and that even in controversy with heretics.

Thus St. Augustine proved the effect of the Eucharist, the effect of baptism in infants, original sin, the necessity of grace in order both to the beginning of faith and to perseverance.

When twitted by Julian with his having only the "murmur" of the people to oppose in argument to the Pelagian doctrine, he justified himself by declaring the weight of such a testimony.

2. Another criterion of divinity of tradition, and so of the divinity of any particular doctrine, is the teaching of the Fathers.

If that teaching is unanimous, or, if their consent as to any doctrine is clear, their authority is manifestly irrefragable; and that whether we consider them merely as witnesses of tradition, or as authoritative teachers.

It resolves itself, under the first aspect, into the Catholic understanding and belief in its most powerful form. It resolves itself, under the second, into the correlative of the consentient belief of the faithful, namely, the doctrine of their divinely authoritative teachers, in union one with another, and in subordination to their visible head and centre of unity.

In this chapter, however, we are concerned chiefly with the authority of the Fathers taken singly, and with the value of their individual teaching, as a criterion of divinity of doctrine.

In the first place, we must clearly define what we mean by a Father of the Church.

Four things are required in order that an ecclesiastical writer should be numbered among

those who, in the strict and proper sense, are called Fathers of the Church.

First, his writings must be of importance in order to the preservation, definition, or illustration of apostolic doctrine and tradition. This they may be, not so much from their number and length, or from the erudition which they display, as from their antiquity and the simple orthodoxy of their doctrine. This is the case as to the writings of some of the Apostolic Fathers and early apologists.

Secondly, Besides *doctrine*, there is required in him not only perseverance until death in communion with the Catholic Church, but also *sanctity* of life. This includes a peculiar and intimate union with God, the source and fountain of all wisdom, from which union results a more profound and sublime understanding of the Christian faith and discipline, along with an ardent love of the Church, of unity, and of sincerity and purity of doctrine. This sanctity will in no way render such men as private individuals infallible in their teaching; and yet it gives to them, even as individuals, an authority in teaching such as will not belong to other individual ecclesiastical writers, even those of the greatest antiquity. The lack of this second requisite is a reason why writers such as Tatian, Tertullian, Origen, Arnobius, Lactantius, Euse-

bius, Rufinus, and the like, are not reckoned among the Fathers.

Thirdly, With these two qualifications of doctrine and sanctity must be joined *antiquity*, as a requisite in order that an ecclesiastical writer should be numbered among the Fathers. The ancient bishops and doctors were wont to call by the name of Fathers those of their predecessors who had been distinguished for their purity of faith, for their orthodoxy of doctrine, and for their holiness of life, and from whom they had themselves received the Christian doctrine. But for many centuries it has been the practice to distinguish, as to the bestowal of this title, two ages of the Church. The first age is that period of time which was in great measure occupied with the explanation, illustration, and defence of Christian doctrine and discipline against the various heresies as they arose. The holy theologians, who were also for the most part bishops, by whose labours, studies, and writings this was effected, and from whom succeeding ages received the doctrine so explained, illustrated, and defended, were, from their greater nearness to apostolic times, as well as from their learning and sanctity, regarded by the bishops and doctors their successors, as fathers are regarded by their children, with a peculiar veneration, and as possessing a special authority. Thus those ancient and holy

theologians and bishops came to be called the Fathers of the Church; and the time during which they lived to be known as the Age of the Fathers. The precise limits of this age, and consequently the number of the Fathers, is not determined by all writers in the same way; and for this reason, that although the objective Catholic revelation is incapable of increase after the time of the apostles, yet its explanation, illustration, and defence can never be simply and absolutely said to be ended. Most commonly, however, St. Bernard, who died in 1153, is reckoned and spoken of as the last of the Fathers.

Lastly, there is required, in order that an ecclesiastical writer should be numbered among the Fathers, the *approbation* of the Church. This, when in any such writer are found combined the three requisites of doctrine, sanctity, and antiquity, is never lacking. It is, in fact, already included in these. A solemn decree expressing this approbation is not necessary; there suffices a, so to speak, practical consent.

The idea of a *Doctor* of the Church is slightly different from that of a *Father* of the Church. The prerogative of a Doctor of the Church does not include *antiquity;* while at the same time it implies copiousness and excellence of doctrine more than does the title of Father. Hence, some saints who were never reckoned among the Fathers,

and some also who have always, and without controversy, been numbered among them, have been, by a solemn decree of the Holy See, declared Doctors of the Church. We find, for instance, St. Thomas Aquinas so declared by St. Pius V., St. Buonaventure by Xystus V., St. Peter Damian by Leo XII., St. Bernard by Pius VIII., St. Hilary and St. Alphonsus Liguori by Pius IX.

There is a common distinction, suggested by the number of the Evangelists, of the four great Doctors of the Western Church—St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory the Great, balanced by the four great Doctors of the Eastern Church—St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Chrysostom.

Having, then, defined what we mean by the Fathers of the Church, we may proceed to consider their authority as individuals, their individual value as witnesses of tradition or as teachers of Christian doctrine, or, their individual teaching as it is a criterion of divinity of doctrine.

It is evident that their authority as individuals is not in itself infallible and peremptory; and for this reason, that no pre-eminence, either in learning or in sanctity, even when these two are found in combination, can afford any certain security that their possessors should never err, and so be a solid guarantee of irrefragable authority. The one ground of such authority is the perpetual assistance of the

Divine Spirit of truth. This assistance has not been promised to individual bishops or to individual doctors, but to those alone who, by the institution of Christ, have been invested with the function of authoritatively teaching the Universal Church, and to them only in the performance of this function—that is to say, to the successors of St. Peter, each of whom is individually the source, centre, and bond of unity and consent—and to the universal episcopate regarded as one whole, as one body in union with and in subordination to its visible head on earth.

It follows, therefore, that the consent of the Fathers to any doctrine as of divine faith is an infallible criterion of the divinity of its tradition; not on the ground that those Fathers so consenting are in themselves and as individuals subjectively infallible, or that they may in any way become so by means of such consent, but for this sole reason that, although as individuals each might err, yet, from the promise of Christ, it is infallibly certain that there never would be a consent of all to any error contrary to faith, since such common consent would either suppose or effect a common corruption of the faith delivered to the Church of God.

Although, however, the testimony or teaching of individual Fathers is not of infallible authority, or an infallible criterion of the divinity of a doctrine, yet not only piety but also reason

dictates that their authority, even as individuals, is not lightly to be depreciated.

This is manifest when we consider the function of pastors, as well as that of doctors, which belonged to most of them—their singular faith, their ardent love both of unity and truth, their knowledge and learning in all matters of Christian doctrine and discipline, their exalted sanctity whereby, through special divine illumination, they became more apt instruments of God, and expressed the doctrine of His Christ not only by their words and in their writings, but also by their lives, their antiquity, and, consequently, greater nearness to the first beginnings of Christianity, to the times of the apostles and of Christ Himself; and, finally, the special veneration wherewith they were held in the Church of God, both during their lives and after their deaths, as chosen by a singular providence of God towards His Church, and abundantly enriched with special graces of wisdom, learning, and holiness, in order to the explanation, illustration, and defence of the Christian faith.

It is frequently objected that there is no real, clear, and constant consent of the Fathers as to points of doctrine in proof of which their testimony is adduced.

It is maintained that an universal affirmative

consent of the Fathers of one age is opposed by the universal affirmative consent of the Fathers of another age; or that the doctrine of some of the Fathers is contrary to the common doctrine of the rest; or that, at one time there does not appear to be any consent, but that some hold one thing and some another, and that afterwards in a subsequent age all are to be found agreed in one judgment.

Now, it is evident that an apparent opposition between a consent of the Fathers in one age and a consent of succeeding Fathers in a subsequent age, must, as to matters of faith, be apparent only, and can in no way be real.

This must be so from the principles which we have already laid down as to the connection between such consent as an effect or result and its cause, the perpetual assistance of the ever-abiding Spirit of truth. In such cases of *apparent opposition*, it may always be shewn either that the opposition is not as to the *matter* of faith, but as to the *mode* of its expression; or that the *supposed* consent of a preceding age was not a *real* consent, and much less *a common* profession of faith, but a private opinion more or less prevalent among certain Fathers. If from lack of historical evidence, or of hermeneutical arguments, this cannot in any instance be clearly shewn, then we are certainly justified in falling

back upon the theological argument of the impossibility of any such real opposition.

If among the Fathers of any age some appear to hold one thing, and some another, all that follows is this, that from their divergence of opinion, the doctrine in question cannot be proved to be of divine faith, on the ground of their consentient belief. It does not follow that it could not be proved by other means.

If again, some few Fathers appear in their writings to contradict the constant and common doctrine of their age, the presumption should at least be that such contradiction is apparent merely, and not real. Nothing could be more repugnant to the principles of the Fathers than that they should teach or hold a doctrine in opposition to the common belief; and, therefore, when their words are ambiguous, we ought in fairness to interpret them in accordance with the common doctrine, even if they do not express this in their most obvious and strict signification. There are several propositions, terms, and expressions to be found in the writings of heretics verbally similar to, or even identical with, others in the works of the Fathers. As used by the heretics, and in their sense, these propositions have been condemned. In the sense of the Fathers, and as used by them, they had a true and catholic meaning, as is apparent from their explanation by their contexts, and

from the doctrine of the same Fathers, more clearly expressed in other places of their works.

With all this, however, it is yet not to be denied that the Fathers might err; and that, in point of fact, as to some matters of doctrine, they really have erred from the truth.

The reason why there may for a time be a diversity of judgment possible within the pale of the Church, as to a matter of doctrine, and why therefore there may be found a difference among the Fathers, is generally the obscurity of the question previous to a solemn judgment of the teaching authority; from this that the point of doctrine is as yet only implicitly contained in another doctrine, and not yet clearly and explicitly proposed by itself for belief; or from this that it is supposed by practice and custom rather than set forth by clear, distinct and express teaching.

Such diversity of judgment, moreover, and difference of opinion is itself an index and argument that the question has not yet been sufficiently elucidated for solution.

Such obscurity, however, has never at any time obtained as to those fundamental revealed doctrines which it is incumbent upon all explicitly to know and believe, and which are therefore contained in the public profession of belief, or creed. Neither could any such diversity of judgment or difference of opinion be admitted as

possible, as to any revealed doctrine whatsoever, *after* a solemn and public definition of that doctrine by the divine teaching authority.

The case most frequently objected against the consent of the Fathers, is that concerning the Millennium. Several Fathers before the fourth century held the opinion of the Millenarians or Chiliasts who taught a reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years, before the general resurrection. But this was merely a private opinion of individual Fathers, and was never a matter of consentient belief, as a doctrine of faith, by the Fathers of any age. The history of this opinion serves to bring out clearly the essential difference between a private opinion however widely diffused, and a really universal consentient belief. To enter upon this history, however, is not to our present purpose.

One point remains to be noticed as to the authority of individual Fathers. There are a few from whose single testimony we may gather the consent of the apostolic succession of authoritative teachers, their common doctrine, and the consequently common belief of the faithful subject to them. There have been some Fathers and Doctors who in certain controversies were set forward as the recognised champions of the Catholic cause; and who, as such, fought under the eyes and with the applause of the Universal Church. Among such spokesmen of the Church in their day, and with

regard to particular controversies, were St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Hilary, St. Augustine, St. Leo the Great, and others. This special authority belongs to them, however, only as regards the points strictly in controversy with the heretics; and not as regards all matters treated by them in the course of their defence of the common faith.

3. Having considered the nature and value of two criteria of divinity of doctrine, the consent of the faithful, and the authority of the Fathers, we come now to consider a third, namely,—the teaching of the schools.

And first, as to the position of the schools, their relation to, and connection with the Universal Church, its authoritative pastors, and their supreme head.

The Catholic schools, from the twelfth century up to the middle of the eighteenth, and especially the schools of theology, with which we are immediately concerned, were under the guardianship and solicitous supervision of the Church. This, both as matter of right and as matter of fact, was certainly the case with regard to the schools in more ancient times. In modern days, although this relation cannot, as matter of fundamental right, be altered; yet, as matter of fact, it is not always and everywhere so clearly evident, by reason

of those violations of right, whereby the civil power has endeavoured to divorce even the theological schools from their intimate connection with the Church, and to remove them from under her authority. Whatever therefore may be argued as to the schools of more recent days, it is certain that previously schools were not regarded as lawfully established save by the authority of the Apostolic See. They were erected by diploma of the Roman Pontiff, were subject to the watchful care of the Holy See, and derived all their rights, privileges, and authority in teaching, from the Church. In accordance with this intimate connection and subordinate relation to the Church, the theological schools and the colleges of doctors set before them as their scope and end the sincere exposition, explanation, and defence of the Church's doctrine and discipline. If any of these doctors seemed to be falling away into dangerous doctrines, he was at once restrained and corrected by the schools themselves, in virtue of their sub-delegated authority, by means of the proscription of his propositions, and by scientific censures, by the authority of the bishops, or by the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff.

From schools so constituted, came forth, as from their *almæ matres*, the bishops, for the most part, and the principal clergy; to whom the instruction which they had received in the schools

was the human element in order to their understanding of the Christian doctrine and discipline, wherewith they in turn instructed and ruled the Christian people.

Moreover, the bishops, the pontiffs, and the councils, in declaring and defining doctrine, took counsel of the schools and doctors of theology, and regarded this inquiry into their common doctrine as a preparation in order to a final authoritative definition.

Looking then to the principle whereby the Catholic schools were governed, to their connection with and relation to the Universal Church and its supreme pastors, to the whole scope and genius, scientific and moral, of the doctors of theology, and to the weight given to their common doctrine, it is evident that a point of doctrine on which all the schools were agreed, by a settled and constant judgment, as a doctrine of faith, was a doctrine comprehended in the Catholic knowledge and understanding of the faith common to the apostolic succession of divinely authoritative teachers, and to the whole Church.

Although, therefore, the schools, and the theologians of the schools, are not an organ instituted by Christ, in order to the preservation of the revealed doctrine under the assistance of the Spirit of truth; yet from an unanimous and constant judgment of theirs in matters of faith, when they

teach a doctrine not only as true, but as to be believed with divine faith, we are led to a knowledge of that Catholic understanding and doctrine which the apostolic succession, as the divinely constituted guardian and divinely authoritative interpreter of revelation, preserves and delivers.

To the theological schools, as one whole, is to be applied what we have said in the first section of this chapter as to the *Ecclesia discens*, or Christian people; inasmuch as these schools, so long as they remain truly theological and in due subordination to the *Ecclesia docens* or body of authoritative teachers, form a distinguished part of the *Ecclesia discens*. Infallibility has not been promised to the school immediately and in itself; but infallibility extends to it mediately and through the ministry of the teaching body, to which, by the obedience of faith, it cleaves and is subjected.

When the doctors of the school, as the result of their inquiry, human study, and human knowledge, propose their own judgments as to revealed doctrine, and their own deductions from the sources of revelation, with unanimous consent, as *true*, but not as believed, or as to be believed, by the Church *with divine faith*, the authority of such teaching is indeed most weighty, and so weighty as that no man might oppose it without incurring the censure at least of rashness; yet we cannot say that the

school, in the process of its inquiry and human study, is immediately under the infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost, which has been promised, and is guaranteed only to the successor of Peter, and to the successors of the apostles in union with, and subject to him.

As we have said with regard to the teaching of the Fathers, so we say also with regard to that of the theologians, that when there is no clear, constant, and consentient doctrine, but grave theologians hold some one thing and some another, and, much more, when they propose a matter simply by way of *opinion*, then all that follows is merely this—that the point is not to be proved by means of their authority; but it in no way follows that it may not be proved by other means, and that a definite and infallible judgment may not be finally given by the lawful supreme authority.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUPREME RULE OF INTERPRETATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, AND OF EXPLANATION OF THE REVEALED DOCTRINE WHICH THEY CONTAIN.

THE Sacred Scriptures are, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the result of an operation of the Holy Ghost. They were inspired by Him, so as that, although written by means of human instruments, they are yet, in a real, true, and strict sense, the words of God, and have God for their principal Author. They are His written Word.

By the same Holy Ghost who inspired them, have these Scriptures been preserved. He has preserved not only the material words, formulas, and propositions, of which they consist, but the ideas and truths which these express.

This also He has done through the ministry of men, by means of that Church in which He dwells, on which, and through which, He operates. The unity of this Church, and its consentient belief and profession is the central and chief criterion of the integrity of that apostolic and Christian doctrine of which she has been made the depository.

Of this unity, the Living Rock laid by Christ Himself as the foundation of that Church against which the gates of hell should not prevail, Peter ever persevering in his See, and ever living in his successors, is the *formal* cause. The *efficient* cause is the ever-present assistance of the Spirit of truth.

Now, as the whole revealed doctrine is preserved in its entirety by the Catholic Church, in her consentient knowledge, understanding, and belief, so also is the true sense of the written words which, in the Sacred Scriptures, express that doctrine. They are an instrument, in the hands of the Church, in order to its preservation and propagation. But because they are an instrument eminently useful, nay, even invaluable, do not let us therefore commit ourselves to the inconsequence, that they are an *essential* or *necessary* instrument. They are an instrument which, had it so pleased her Divine Founder, the Church might have done without; and which in fact was, for generations, not in her possession as it was afterwards and is to-day; and that for this simple reason that it was not, during her earlier years, in existence. From the fact, however, that it was at once a deposit and an instrument in her hands, it clearly follows that to her belongs its interpretation and explanation.

As the teaching of the Church, whether contained in her common belief or expressed by her definitive

judgment, is, in general, the rule of faith; so is it also, in special, the rule of understanding of the Scriptures, and the supreme canon of their interpretation.

This it may be in two ways.

First, if the Church's teaching, whether contained in her common belief or expressed by her judgment, has regard to any determinate passage of the Sacred Scriptures, and has for its scope an authoritative declaration of the sense of such a passage, then clearly the sense which she propounds is the true and genuine sense which the Holy Ghost, in His inspiration of the passage, willed to be expressed in writing.

To this supreme canon of interpretation, where it exists and is clearly manifest, all other rules of interpretation, whether taken from grammar, philology, archæology, the context whether proximate or remote, the scope of the author, comparison with other passages, or from any other source soever, are certainly subordinate. They are valuable only in order to a *scientific* demonstration of that sense which is already *theologically certain* to be the true one. If, proceeding according to the rules of merely human and scientific interpretation, a sense be arrived at which is in any way contrary to, or even other than and diverse from the sense declared by the divine teaching authority, then, supposing that there is only one sense of such a passage, the

fallaciousness of the scientific interpretation is evident. Either the means used have not been fitting and sufficient, or they have not been rightly used. An adverse scientific and purely human interpretation will in no way throw legitimate doubt on, or render less certain, the divinely authoritative and infallible interpretation of the Church.

Besides the solemn definition of a council or of the Roman Pontiff, embodying the Church's understanding of the determinate sense of a passage of Scripture, there are other modes whereby that understanding may be manifested.

There is the unanimous consent of the Fathers, when they are found agreed in their interpretation of a dogmatic text, or of a text which relates to the moral law. The only difference is that this latter mode of manifestation is less clear and less easily apprehended than the former.

Hence the Council of Trent decrees, that no one, trusting to his own prudence, should, in matters pertaining to faith or morals, twist Sacred Scripture to his own sense, *contrary to that sense which our Holy Mother the Church has held and holds*, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and again, that no one should dare to interpret the same Sacred Scriptures *contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.* The Council, by this decree, says Pallavicini in his history, laid

down nothing new, nor did it wish to impose any new obligation, but only to teach and confirm an obligation already existing, which our faith, of its own nature, induces.

But not only in a *negative* sense is the Church's teaching a canon, and the supreme canon of interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures; it is so also in a positive or *affirmative* sense. It declares not only that the doctrine enunciated is both true and also revealed, and it teaches not only what sense a particular passage does not bear, but also what sense is intended to be expressed by it, or that the doctrine in question is contained in that passage.

The Church is no less infallible specially, in determining and explaining the sense of Scripture, to which the deposit of faith has been consigned, than she is generally in her guardianship and explanation of the deposit itself. Hence not only is an interpretation contradictory of or contrary to the sense defined by her, but also any explanation so diverse as to deny that the sense so defined is contained in the passage, is "*contrary* to that sense which our Holy Mother the Church has held and holds." An interpretation which is not *according to* the sense defined, is contrary to that sense; the prohibition of the Council being equivalent to an injunction that no one should interpret Scripture save according to the sense of the

Church. Hence we have in the profession of faith prescribed by Pius IV., the affirmative declaration,—I admit the Sacred Scriptures according to that sense, which our Holy Mother the Church has held and holds, to whom it belongs to judge as to the true sense and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures; neither will I ever accept or interpret the same save according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

That this is the genuine sense of the Trent decree, the Œcumenical Council of the Vatican has solemnly declared,—We, renewing the same decree, declare this to be the mind of the Council of Trent, that in matters of faith, and of morals, which pertain to the edification of Christian doctrine, *that is to be held as the true sense of Sacred Scripture*, which our Holy Mother the Church has held and holds, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and that, therefore, it is *lawful to no one* to interpret the Sacred Scriptures, contrary to this sense, or contrary also to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

By this decree is condemned the opinion of certain modern critics, who held that it was lawful to interpret such passages of Scripture in a sense diverse from that ascribed to them by the Church, and to deny that they express that sense which the Church has understood, or has even by a

solemn judgment declared them to express, so long as no doctrine contrary to the Catholic faith was thereby attempted to be proved. This opinion supposed that the Trent decree was to be taken in merely a *negative* sense. The Vatican decree shews that it is to be understood also in the *affirmative* sense.

It excludes also the opinion of those who held that in the Trent decree there was only a disciplinary caution, and not a dogmatic and irreformable declaration.

But besides this special prerogative of the Church's teaching, as the supreme canon of interpretation, when it relates to a particular passage of the Sacred Scriptures, and explicitly determines its sense, that teaching is also a canon of interpretation of the Scriptures generally; and this in a sense both negative and positive.

It is so, *negatively*, inasmuch as no interpretation can be a true one which gives to any text of Scripture a meaning opposed to the proximate rule of faith; for truth cannot contradict truth.

It is so also *positively*, inasmuch as it is an aid in order to a more certain and fuller understanding of difficult passages. Certain knowledge of an article of faith, already possessed and otherwise derived, must manifestly be of the greatest service in the interpretation of all passages relating to such an article; and especially of those

which, while they may be reasonably understood to relate to it, are yet at the same time not so explicit and unambiguous as that their sense can be determined from themselves alone. The writers of such passages suppose in their readers a previous knowledge of doctrine; and this is necessary in order to arrive at their true sense.

This method of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures in accordance with the supreme canon of the Church's teaching, is what is called the *law of interpretation according to the analogy of the faith.*

The faith, as a norm of knowledge in at least a negative sense, directs not only the interpretation of the written word, but all sciences. Theology, or the science of faith, is in this sense queen of sciences. She is so not only from the supreme dignity of her subject-matter, but also from her imperial relation towards them; inasmuch as the apparent conclusions of *human* science cannot possibly be legitimate and true, if they are found at variance with her *divine* teaching.

It is frequently objected that, supposing what we have said as to the Church's teaching being the supreme canon of interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, there can be no place in the Catholic Church for hermeneutical science or exegesis of Scripture, or that these at least are useless. Such an objection is absurd. By previous knowledge of certain truths, the science of interpretation is not

only not hindered, but is on the contrary aided and promoted. Nothing can be more valuable and desirable in a scientific investigation, than that the inquirer should previously, and from other and certain sources, know what is not and what cannot be true, and so know what errors are to be avoided; or, than that he should, in like manner, previously know what is true, and so know in what direction he is to pursue his inquiries, and what he should endeavour to demonstrate scientifically by means of his arguments.

The objection has its root in a twofold error. The first is dogmatic, and is this—that the objectors regard the Church's teaching and judgment as if it were an *opinion* to be tested and determined by means of the Scriptures. The second error is scientific. The objectors do not advert to this, that it is one thing to know with absolute certainty on infallible authority what sense does not belong, and also what sense does belong, to a passage of Scripture; and quite another thing to understand the *reasons* from the text and context, why and in what way such sense is true and genuine. This last is the proper fruit of scientific interpretation. In exegesis no less than in theology generally, is to be found *fides quærens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding" of its subject-matter.

We need scarcely say that, in speaking of the Church as judge of the true sense, whether

of the Sacred Scriptures or of Tradition, we in no way mean to imply that she gives to either any *intrinsic* authority. The Word of God, whether expressed in Scripture or contained in Tradition, has its own intrinsic authority, because it is the Word of Infinite Truth. For this reason it is the norm of belief to the Universal Church. The Church, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost guaranteed to her, has only to discern this Word of God from that which is not the word of God, and authoritatively to interpret its genuine sense.

We do not, as our adversaries accuse us, set the Church above the Word of God. We say, on the contrary, that the Church is directed in her belief by the Word of God, and so is under the Word of God. But we do say, that she infallibly understands the genuine sense of that Word, and that with divine authority she proposes it to all, and that therefore she is above the private and fallible understanding of individuals.

While on this subject of the supreme authority of the Church's teaching, it may be well to lay down some principles from which we may see clearly, first, where that authority resides, and secondly, to what matters it extends.

The Church is infallible in her teaching, in virtue of her divine authority to teach. The *subjects*, therefore, of infallibility, that is, the persons invested with this infallibility in teaching, are all

those, and those only, to whom the right and office of teaching the Universal Church has been divinely committed.

The *Ecclesia docens*, or teaching Church, that is, the whole body of pastors and teachers, existing in the unity of one communion, in union each with the other as members of one body, and all in union with, and in subordination to, their one common, supreme, and visible head, is, as we have seen, infallible alike in its common, consentient teaching, and in its solemn judgments or definitions. It was to the corporate body of the apostolic succession that Christ's promises were made, and not to individual successors of the apostles; for as individuals they do not succeed to the apostles in their function of authoritatively teaching the Universal Church, that function being to His apostles (with the exception of Peter, the head of the Church, and who ever perseveres in his successors), not ordinary, but extraordinary, and therefore personal.

The *efficient* cause of the infallibility of the *Ecclesia docens*, or, the one body of pastors and teachers, is the promised assistance of the Spirit of truth. But the *condition* without which the successors of the apostles would not be the *Ecclesia docens;* or, the *formal* cause whereby they are constituted the *Ecclesia docens*, is, the visible head of the Church, and the union and agreement of the members with this head; just as, universally, the

form of the unity of the visible Church, or what makes it to be that which it is, namely—one, is the visible head of that Church.

Hence, the *ordinary* gift of infallible teaching, that is, the gift not personal to the apostles, but bestowed upon them to be propagated to their successors, was promised to the apostles, not as individuals, but as forming one college or corporate body in union with Peter.

On the contrary, the words of Christ, whereby the primacy and, as comprehended in the primacy, infallible authority was promised and bestowed on Peter, point to him alone ; and that not only as expressly distinct from the others, but as standing in the relation to them of one who should confirm and feed them.

Peter, therefore, by an *ordinary* gift for himself and for each and all of his successors, received from Christ the power and office of feeding and teaching the Universal Church, so as that this power bestowed in Peter on his successors should, of the divine institution, exact an "obedience of faith" and the consent of the whole Church.

Hence the infallibility of the whole Church in its belief could not exist, save as a result of the bestowal on Peter's successor, as head of the Church, of infallibility in teaching, with a right of exacting a consent of faith, when he, by a definitive judgment proposes a doctrine concerning faith

or morals, by which he means to oblige the whole Church to such consent.

He, therefore, the successor of Peter, is the subject of infallibility, or, that person in whom infallibility resides, in virtue of the divine assistance promised to him individually, as teaching the Church, and apart from any condition of the concurrent judgment or consent of the other pastors and teachers. They in respect of him, so teaching the Church, are the most noble part of that Church built upon the rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail ; but they are at the same time his brethren, to be confirmed by him whose faith should never fail, and his sheep to be fed by him who is the one chief shepherd of the one fold of Christ. In respect of the faithful committed to their charge, they remain their pastors and teachers authoritatively proposing to them, teaching and defending the doctrine infallibly defined.

The words of the Vatican Council on this point are as follows :—" It is a revealed dogma of faith, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*,—that is, when, executing his office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, he, by his supreme apostolic authority, defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the Universal Church, —in virtue of the divine assistance, promised to him in blessed Peter, possesses that infallibility wherewith the Divine Redeemer willed His Church to be

endowed, in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals; and therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, irreformable."

The *subject* of infallibility here spoken of is not twofold; that is, there are not two subjects, distinguished from each other by an adequate distinction. The subject is—the visible Head of the Church, regarded by himself,—and the same visible Head regarded as informing the body of the *Ecclesia docens.* This body so informed and therefore constituted as a perfect body with its head, is infallible, in virtue of the life-giving assistance of the Spirit of truth.

Previous consent of the Church is indeed an objective means whereby the Pontiff might arrive at his knowledge of a doctrine as definable; but it is not in itself, or of its nature, the only means, or a necessary means of such knowledge. Doctrines concerning faith or morals may be known to be definable, by other means and from other sources; and matters now doubtful, and the subject of controversy within the Church, may hereafter be defined by the Roman Pontiff.

In no way, moreover, is the consent of the Church or of the bishops, whether such consent be antecedent, concomitant, or subsequent, necessary by way of authoritative judgment in concurrence with the judgment or definition of the Pontiff.

Subsequent consent of the whole Church is not a confirmation, for no confirmation is needed; but it is always an *effect* of a pontifical definition.

The Gallican opinion, which required the consent of the Church, as necessary in order to the infallibility of pontifical definitions,—so as that the *body* of the *Ecclesia docens*, that is to say, the Pontiff along with the bishops, should be the one subject of infallibility,—is now a heresy, directly and explicitly condemned by the Vatican Council.

As to the expression *ex cathedra*, it is explained by the words of the Vatican Council, which we have quoted. The *cathedra apostolica*, or apostolic chair, is none other than that supreme authority whose definitive doctrinal judgment obliges a consent of the Universal Church.

The intention of defining doctrine, or of teaching by a definitive judgment and with an authority which shall oblige a consent of the Universal Church, ought indeed to be made manifest, and to be clearly discernible.

There is however, no determinate essential form which a Pontiff must use in order to make this his intention manifest. For although there are certain solemn forms which of themselves express the fact that his judgment is *ex cathedra*, and which the Pontiff never uses save in speaking *ex cathedra*, such as, for instance, the form of a dogmatic Bull; yet such forms are not essential and exclusive so

as that, without them, a Pontiff could not, as pastor and teacher of all Christians, define doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the Universal Church, condemn errors opposed to such doctrine, and make manifest at the same time his intention of so doing.

It may be, however, that documents which most certainly contain a definition of doctrine, and are intended to define it, contain also several matters, definition of which is not intended; such as indirect incidental statements, or arguments which might be used to prove *scientifically* the doctrine which is defined, and which may also have formed the Pontiff's proximate preparation for his subsequent definition. If so, then such statements and arguments have the gravest authority; but they are not infallible definitions.

Again, there may be and are public pontifical utterances whereby it is intended to admonish, persuade, and reprehend, or to prohibit the propagation of some opinion or error, without its being intended that they should be definitive judgments, by which the whole Church should be bound. Such utterances would therefore not be *ex cathedra*.

So far as to the *subject* of infallibility, or, as to where infallibility resides. A fuller treatment of this not falling within our present scope, we proceed to consider the *object* of infallibility, or, the matters to which the Church's infallibility extends.

The deposit of the Christian faith, taken in its strict sense, comprehends *all* those things, and those things *only*, which have been, either explicitly or implicitly, revealed by God to be believed or done by the human race, in order to eternal salvation.

In this deposit of faith are comprehended dogmatic, ethical or moral, and political truths ; that is to say, theoretical doctrines, practical precepts, and perpetual and fundamental institutions and ordinances, such as the existence of the Church, its powers, its form of government, and the like.

Among those dogmatic truths are included such truths as are known not only by revelation, but also by natural reason, and which form what is commonly called natural religion. In like manner among the moral precepts so revealed are included those also of that natural law which is written in the hearts of men, and known by the natural light of reason.

Those truths alone which have been not only revealed by God, but also sufficiently proposed to men for their belief, may be and must be believed *with divine faith*, such faith being assent by reason of the authority of God as revealing. In the deposit of faith, however, there may be objectively contained, besides these, other revealed truths which have not yet been so proposed to all men, as to

compel from all an assent of divine faith in them as divinely revealed.

Moreover, with revealed truths sufficiently proposed are connected many truths without which the revealed truths themselves could not, or, at least, could not well and in all their fulness be guarded, explained, and defended; although such truths are not revealed, or have not been sufficiently proposed so as to be believed with divine faith. The deposit of faith would therefore be injured, and its possession by the faithful would be imperilled, by errors opposed to such truths; by reason of their theological connection with revealed truths, even although they are not themselves revealed.

He to whom has been committed by Christ the office of infallibly preserving the deposit of faith, and guarding it against error, has infallible authority, in the first place, to guard, propose, and explain the truths which strictly constitute that deposit, and to condemn all heresies, that is to say, all errors opposed to divinely revealed and proposed truths. This is a fundamental revealed doctrine of the Catholic faith: a denial of this is not only heresy, but it is the root of all heresies.

But, besides this, and as a consequence of this, or, as a truth contained within this, his infallible authority extends also to truths which are themselves not revealed; but which are so con-

nected with revealed truths as to be necessary in order to the preservation, proposition, explanation, or defence of these. In other words, infallibility is not restricted to the preservation of the deposit, strictly so called; but extends to the preservation of the deposit in all its fulness. This extension of infallibility is a truth which is theologically certain.

Further, the infallibility of the Church and of the Roman Pontiff is itself to be believed with divine faith, by reason of the authority of God revealing it. A proposition which is defined by the Church or by the Roman Pontiff *as true*, but not as revealed, is to be believed by reason of the revealed authority of the proposer. Such belief may be called *mediately divine faith.*

If the Church is infallible in preserving the deposit of faith, and so in declaring the true sense of revealed doctrines, it follows that it is infallible in judging as to the true sense and measure of its own authority and infallibility; or, in other words, as to the conditions under which, and as to the matters with regard to which, it possesses that authority, and the promised assistance of the Spirit of truth; this authority and infallibility being itself a divinely revealed doctrine.

In virtue of her infallibility, it cannot be that the Church should ever trespass beyond the limits of her own province. These limits it belongs to her, and to her alone, to determine. In de-

fining matters which lie also within the field of human science, and in condemning the errors opposed to the scientific truths which she affirms, she judges, not from the principles of human sciences, but from her own. She never judges, and, in virtue of her infallibility, she never can judge,—that is, the Holy Ghost, by His assistance, will never permit her to define,—save in order to the preservation of the deposit, and in the legitimate exercise of that divinely entrusted function.

Although philosophy and other human sciences rest upon their own proper principles, as these are known, not from revelation or on the divine authority of the Church, but by reason and from natural sources; yet the Church can and ought, from the principles of revelation, to point out errors to be avoided in the course of scientific investigation, which might be adverse to the preservation and perception of the divine deposit of faith in its entirety and purity. Hence Catholic men of science should keep these principles ever in view, and for two reasons: one dictated by reason itself, namely, lest they should fall into scientific error; for their reason, instructed by their faith, tells them that there can be no scientific truth which is in opposition to revealed truth: and the other dictated by faith, lest they should fall into doctrinal errors contrary to the truths of faith.

Those who profess to be Catholics, and therefore to recognise the supreme authority of the Catholic Church, and who yet, nevertheless, affirm that philosophy should not be so subjected to theology, that by such subjection the progress of science is hindered, and that the Church should leave philosophy to correct her own errors, are really demanding liberty to embrace error by an abuse of philosophy, and are denying to the Church her right and office of providing for the integrity and purity of the doctrine of faith.

Besides her power of infallible definition in matters of doctrine, the Church has power also to prescribe certain theological propositions as to be followed, and to proscribe certain others as not to be followed; even when she has no intention of thereby infallibly deciding by a definitive judgment, but only of providing for the *security* of Catholic doctrine.

This may be called her authority of *universal ecclesiastical providence*, as distinguished from her authority of *infallibility*. To this authority is due a *religious* assent of the intellect; as an assent of *divine faith* is due to her authority of infallibility, when she proposes a doctrine *as revealed*, and as an assent of *mediately divine faith* is due to the same authority when she defines a doctrine *as true*, but not as revealed.

His authority of *infallibility* cannot be commu-

nicated by the Pontiff to others as his ministers, or as acting in his name. Hence, if an infallible definition should issue from any of the Roman Congregations, such congregation has intervened only by way of consultation and ministerial promulgation,—the Pontiff himself alone defining.

His authority, on the other hand, of *universal ecclesiastical providence*, whereby he does not define doctrine, but provides for its *security*, is communicable ; and is in fact communicated, to a greater or less extent, to the Sacred Congregations of Cardinals, but always of course with due dependence on the Pontiff himself.

The case of Galileo, so persistently brought forward as an objection against the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, is therefore in no way in point. Not only was there no shadow of an attempt or intention infallibly to define, or to define as Pontiff, but in the whole decree of the Cardinals of the Holy Office, and in the formula of abjuration prescribed to Galileo, the Pontiff's name is never, either directly or indirectly, mentioned.

The case was simply this. A new doctrine in astronomical science was brought forward, and not yet proved so as to afford any solid foundation for interpreting certain passages of the Sacred Scriptures otherwise than in their obvious sense. There were men who, for their day, were most

learned in physical and astronomical science, such as Tycho Brahe, Alexander Tasso, Christopher Scheiner, Antonius Delphinus, and Justus Lipsius, who held that the opinion of Galileo was contrary to the Scriptures. It certainly, therefore, belonged to the *authority of ecclesiastical providence*, to take care and to use means that the interpretation of Scripture should not be imperilled by conjectures and hypotheses which to many in that day seemed but little likely. Had there been a scientific *demonstration* of Galileo's doctrine, it would have been a very different matter. No examination of doctrine was instituted in order to a definition of doctrine for the Universal Church. No one ever thought of this. There was merely a criminal process; and Galileo richly deserved the result by reason of his rashness.

The case serves to set in clear light the solicitude of the Catholic Church and of the Roman Pontiffs on behalf of the Written Word.

CHAPTER X.

THE COMPLETION OF THE WHOLE BODY OF REVEALED DOCTRINE BY JESUS CHRIST AND BY THE HOLY GHOST IN THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH ENTRUSTED TO THE APOSTLES.

THE Catholic revelation,—or that body of divinely-revealed truths which was intended by God as the possession and heritage of the human race, and which was bestowed upon it partly by Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, during the years of His sojourn on earth and among men, and partly after His departure by the Spirit of Truth, Whom He sent from the Father,—was completed and sealed up by the Holy Ghost in the Apostles.

It was so completed as that not only should there be *no new economy* of a more perfect order, and with a more ample revelation; but also that, in the present economy, there should be *no increase* of the deposit of faith.

That after the present economy there should be a new economy of a more perfect order, and with a more ample revelation, was an error of the Montanists, of the Manicheans, of several sects in the Middle Ages, such as the Fraticelli, and of innumerable sects in more modern times, such as

the Anabaptists, the Swedenborgians, and the Irvingites, who looked for a fresh and more abundant outpouring of the Holy Ghost. All these, some in one way and some in another, held a third and more perfect economy of the Holy Ghost; which should stand in a similar relation to the second economy established by Jesus Christ, as this economy stood to the first economy of the Old Testament, or the economy, as some of them called it, of God the Father. This error was a manifest heresy.

It would be also an error to suppose that in the Church itself, which shall endure all days to the consummation of the world, there should in the progress of the ages be received new revelations; as in the Old Testament, up to the time of Jesus of Nazareth and His apostles, new revelations were made to the chosen people of God.

On the contrary, the consummation of the Catholic revelation by Jesus Christ and by the Holy Ghost in the apostles is a point of doctrine expressed both in the Sacred Scriptures and in Tradition, and further, both theoretically and practically, made abundantly manifest in the apostolic succession, and in the whole life of the Catholic Church.

That the present economy of the Church of Jesus Christ is the last and supreme estate of divine manifestation for the present mortal condition of

the human race, is clear from the teaching of the Christian revelation.

In the first place, we find in the Sacred Scriptures the New Testament established by Christ compared to the Old Testament,—as the perfect and completed to the imperfect and only begun, as the stable and unchangeable to that which was to be perfected, and to pass into this estate of perfection. For as the ancient covenant is always exhibited as a thing begun under the hope and with the expectation of a new economy by which it was to be perfected; so the last and final perfection of divine manifestation, to which we are taught in the New Testament to look forward, is none other than that in which present faith shall pass into the future vision of God face to face.

We find this an argument of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. The economy of the Mosaic law was, he argues, imperfect, and only a means of leading to the new and perfect economy of Christ; hence the priesthood of the ancient covenant was inefficacious, and was therefore to be abrogated; and with it also the whole of that economy, by reason of its intimate connection with that priesthood. To it was to succeed the priesthood of Christ, a priesthood of a higher order, efficacious, eternal, and never to be abrogated; and hence the economy founded on that eternal priesthood was to be itself eternal. "If, therefore," he

writes, "perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what farther need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedech, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? for the priesthood being translated, it is necessary that a translation also be made of the law (that is to say, of the whole economy). . . . There is verily an abrogation of the former commandment, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, for the law brought nothing to perfection, but was an introduction of a better hope, by which we approach to God. . . . But this (Christ), for that He continueth for ever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able also to save for ever them that come unto God by Him."

The Old Testament was a shadow and type of the New; to it, therefore, as imperfect, ought to succeed the New Testament, as perfect. The former, by reason of its imperfection, had to pass away; to the latter, by reason of its perfection, no other should succeed. "For," argues the Apostle, "if that first had been faultless, there should not indeed a place have been sought for a second."

Again, from the history of the foundation of the Old and New Testaments, he shews that the New Testament is the last, and that it is unchangeable.

Quoting the prophecy of Aggeus, "Yet once, and I will move not only the earth, but heaven also," he interprets it, "In that He saith yet once, He sig-

nifieth the translation of the moveable things, as of things that are made, that those things remain which are immoveable; wherefore we, receiving an immoveable kingdom, have grace."

In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks of the Old Testament as that which is "done away," and of the New Testament as that which "remaineth." To the Romans he says that "The end of the law is Christ;" and to the Galatians that "The law was our pedagogue in Christ." "Before that the faith of Jesus Christ came," he writes, "we were kept under the law, shut up unto that faith which was to be revealed."

Secondly, as the New Testament is compared with the Old Testament, as the perfect succeeding to the imperfect; so is it never compared, as itself imperfect, with any perfect which should succeed to it, save only with the beatific vision.

With this St. Paul compares it in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. "We know in part," says he, "and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away. We see now through a glass in an obscure manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known."

So also St. John, in his First Epistle, "We are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall

appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."

There was the *shadow* of the Old Testament, there is the *image* of the New Testament, and there shall be the *reality* of the beatific vision.

"The law had a shadow," writes St. Paul to the Hebrews, "of the good things to come, not the very image of the things." The old economy was to the Church of Christ on earth, as that Church is to the Church of Christ in heaven; and so the Church of Christ on earth stands midway between the ancient shadow and the completeness of promised possession.

The same idea is signified also by those expressions of Holy Scripture which describe the present economy as *the fulness of time*, and the revelation made in Christ and by Christ as made *in the last days.*

"When the fulness of the time was come," says the Apostle, "God sent His Son;" and in another place, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to establish all things in Christ." "God," he writes to the Hebrews, "having spoken on divers occasions and many ways, in times past, to the Fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son."

St. Peter also, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, uses the same expression, quoted by him from the Prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will

pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh;" and in his First Epistle he speaks of Christ as "foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you."

It is clear, then, from the Sacred Scriptures, as from the teaching of the Christian revelation, that the present economy of the Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, is the last and supreme estate of divine manifestation for the present mortal condition of the human race, and that there shall be in time no new economy of a more perfect order and with a more ample revelation.

It is equally certain that in this present economy of the Church of Christ there shall be *no increase* of the deposit of faith by way of *new revelation* as there was under the ancient economy; but that, on the contrary, the Catholic revelation, or the whole body of divinely-revealed truths intended by God for the belief of the human race, was completed and sealed up by the Holy Ghost in the deposit of faith entrusted to the apostles of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus enjoined His apostles to teach the nations all things whatsoever He had commanded them. He said that they were to give testimony of Him, by the assistance of the Spirit of Truth, who should *teach them all truth*, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said to them.

They were themselves personally the first promulgators of the entire revelation; their successors,

to the end of the world, are the witnesses and the teachers of those things only which they have received from them. Their office and function is, as St. Paul wrote to Timothy, to hold the form of sound words which they have heard, and to keep the deposit *entrusted* to them by the Holy Ghost, who dwelt in the apostles; to commend the things which they have heard to faithful men who should be fit to teach others also; and to continue in the things which they have *learned*, and which have been *committed* to them, knowing of whom they have learned them.

The faithful, in like manner, are exhorted, as by St. Jude, to contend earnestly for the *faith once delivered* to the Saints; to walk in Christ, as St. Paul wrote to the Colossians, rooted and built up in Him, and confirmed in the faith, *as they had learned.* In this way are they, as he says to the Ephesians, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in Whom also they are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit. St. Paul, moreover, beseeches the Romans to mark those who caused dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid such men.

Although during the apostles' times, when the testimonies which we have quoted from the Sacred Scriptures were uttered, the Catholic revelation

was not yet concluded and sealed up, yet nothing was to be received by the faithful as of Catholic faith which was not either promulgated or confirmed by the apostles themselves.

Hence the ancient tradition that even the inspired books of the two Evangelists who were not also apostles were approved and commended to the Church by apostles, St. Mark's Gospel by St. Peter, and St. Luke's Gospel by St. Paul. When, with the death of the apostles, the *extraordinary* grace of the apostolate in order to the first foundation of the Church, had ceased, no Catholic revelation was thenceforth to be looked for in the Church of God.

That the foregoing is the true and genuine sense of the passages which we have quoted is further evident, were further evidence needed, from the clear and constant doctrine and practice of the Church in all ages.

In the Church three principles were always and everywhere held—First, that the successors of the apostles were the guardians of the apostles' doctrine, to which nothing could be added, and from which nothing could be taken away. "The rule of light is this," says St. Barnabas: "keep what you have received, neither adding anything nor taking anything away." "Neither does he," says St. Irenæus, "who can say much concerning the faith increase it; nor does he who can say but little diminish it." And again, "True know-

ledge is the doctrine of the apostles and the ancient estate of the Church." "For us," says Tertullian, "there is no need of curiosity, after Christ our Leader, and no need of inquiry, after the Gospel; when we believe, we desire nothing farther to believe, for then we have previously believed that nothing farther we may believe. That is to be sought for until you find it which Christ instituted, and which the nations are bound to believe. That, when you have found it, you are to believe. Nought else is to be kept save what you have believed, for this you believe, that nought else is to be believed or sought for, when you have found and believed that which was instituted by Him who commanded no other thing to be sought out by thee than that which He himself instituted." "What Cyprian advises," says St. Augustine, "that we should go to the source, that is, to apostolic tradition, and thence direct the channel to our own times, is what is best, and without doubt to be done." "The faith has not now begun," says St. Athanasius, "but has come to us from the Lord, through His disciples." "We exhort those," says St. Basil, "who hope in Christ not to seek curiously after anything outside the ancient faith." And finally, Vincent of Lerins: "I cannot wonder enough at that so great lust of erring which is found in certain men, who are not content with the rule of believing those things which have been once delivered and anciently received, but who

from day to day are ever seeking new things after new, and always endeavouring to add somewhat to religion, to change it, or to take something from it, as if it were not a heavenly doctrine that *what has been once revealed* suffices."

In like manner, secondly, it was always an universal principle that whatsoever is new belongs not to the faith, but to heresy, if such new thing be confounded with the deposit of faith; and hence, that apostolicity is a necessary characteristic of a doctrine of faith. And finally, the terms "apostolic faith" and "the faith of the Church" were always held as synonymous.

It is certain, therefore, what is and always has been the doctrine of the Church with regard to the completeness of the deposit of faith as entrusted to the apostles; and her practice is and always has been in accordance with, as it is the result of her doctrine.

Whenever, throughout the history of the Church, a point of doctrine has been defined as belonging to the Catholic faith, such definition has always been understood as being precisely the same as to have defined that that revealed doctrine has come to us from the apostles, either through the Sacred Scriptures or through unwritten Tradition. Hence every inquiry previous to a definition, and made as a proximate preparation therefor, always bears on this one point, whether the doctrine proposed

for definition is or is not contained in the Scriptures or in apostolic tradition. That this is the case is apparent from the Acts of all the Councils and from the history of all definitions of faith.

And further, this principle, that nothing can belong to that revelation which is to be believed with Catholic faith which is not contained in Scripture or in apostolic tradition, is both supposed by all theologians in their demonstrations, and is also expressly taught by them.

The question may here be asked, In what way is the doctrine which we have laid down as to the completeness of the Catholic revelation contained in the deposit of faith entrusted to the apostles, to be reconciled with the fact of revelations made since the apostles' time, and preserved in the Catholic Church? It is certain that such revelations and prophecies have been made, and have been received by the faithful, not without the approbation of the Church.

The answer is, that such revelations do not belong to that deposit of Catholic faith which was committed to the Catholic Church, to be preserved, proclaimed, and explained by her; and for this reason, that they are directed, not to the Universal Church, but to private individuals. By private individuals, we mean men who have not been constituted by God His ambassadors to His Church, as the prophets were of old, as the apostles were,

or as were those holy men of God who were inspired by Him in order to the writing of divine books. They are those to whom a revelation has been made, either for their own personal benefit or for the *private* direction and welfare of others.

Consequently, such private revelations not only do not belong to the deposit of Catholic faith, but they are not *per se* even a means in order to its explanation. Such a means Christ has provided in the visible Head of His Church, as he is the principle and foundation of unity of faith, and in the body of the apostolic succession in union with its head, and so living under the promised assistance of the Spirit of Truth. He did not provide for the explanation of the faith by means of new revelations.

Hence Benedict XIV. gives it as one reason, amongst others, why an alleged private revelation may be suspected, should something be said to be revealed which is as yet under the judgment of the Church.

Although this is a legitimate ground for suspicion, there is, however, no repugnance in God's revealing to any one the true meaning of a doctrine contained in the objective apostolic revelation which has not yet been defined by the Church, or sufficiently proposed to all. Thus God might sometimes, by a private revelation made to a

Pontiff, or to certain fathers of a Council, make manifest the true sense of a doctrine. Such a means, however, in order to the explanation of a doctrine, would not be ordinary, but extraordinary. And further, the infallibility of the definition, and the authority of its proposition to the faithful, would be derived, not from such private revelation, but always and solely from the *ordinary* promised assistance of the Holy Ghost; for such assistance alone, and not the aid of a private revelation, has been promised by God, and is infallibly guaranteed to the Universal Church.

As to the belief to be given to private revelations, we may answer briefly, that a private revelation made by God may be, and ought to be, believed with *divine faith* by him *to* whom or *for* whom it is made, if there be evident motives of credibility that it is really a revelation from God; such motives being seldom sufficiently apparent to other persons. Supposing this sufficiency of motive, the revelation must be believed with *divine faith;* since the material object of divine faith is anything whatsoever revealed by God, and the formal motive of such faith is the authority of God revealing. It is not, however, a matter of *Catholic faith*, since the material object of such faith is not any divine truth whatsoever, but a doctrine contained in the deposit of *Catholic* revelation; although the formal motive of *Catholic* faith is,

as it can be, no greater than that of the *divine* faith from which it is distinguished, namely,—the authority of God revealing.

As to the Church's approbation of private revelations, it is not equivalent to a proposition of them by her to the faithful, to be believed with divine faith. It is merely a declaration, first, that they contain nothing contrary to Catholic faith, to sound morals, or to Christian discipline; and secondly, that there is sufficient evidence of their reality that they may piously, prudently, and without superstition, be believed with a *human* faith, and be read with edification by the faithful.

After such approbation by the Church, or even if, apart from any judgment of hers, there be solid reasons for believing in the genuineness of alleged revelations, it is certainly not lawful to despise them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GROWTH OF THE FAITHFUL IN THEIR SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THIS COMPLETED REVELATION.

THE one sole reason why we believe, or the one formal motive of divine faith in revealed truths, is this,—the authority of God revealing. We believe then when an utterance of God is sufficiently proposed or brought home to us as such.

The reason for believing is not to be sought in the greater dignity of the truth to be believed, in its intrinsic necessity, or in its connection with man's last end. All these are properties connected with the *material* object of belief, that is, with the truth *which* is believed; but they in no way supply the motive *by reason of which* we believe it.

Hence the distinction between some articles of faith as fundamental and others as not fundamental is, in this sense, absurd. It is absurd to suppose that there are fundamental articles of divine revelation as to which our consent is indifferent and unnecessary, so as that, in what way soever they may be proposed to us, we may yet, without prejudice of faith and of ecclesiastical communion,

not believe them, and even deny them by reason of their inferior intrinsic dignity and necessity, so long as we give consent to articles which we call fundamental, because of their greater dignity and necessity.

Although, however, this distinction is not only absurd but heretical, there is yet a true distinction between certain material objects of faith, or matters to be believed by us with divine faith; inasmuch as it is not equally necessary that all should be in themselves and explicitly known to all the faithful, and so be *explicitly* believed.

Those things are in themselves and explicitly to be known and believed by all the faithful, a knowledge of which is in itself absolutely necessary to ordain a man towards his supernatural end; or which so constitute a foundation of the Christian religion that it is the duty of every Christian man to know them. The former are necessary, as theologians say, by their necessity *as means;* the latter are necessary by necessity *of precept.* Both have therefore, in every age, been contained in the public profession of the Christian faithful.

But besides these, there are many other matters contained in the Catholic revelation which belong to merely a more perfect and ample knowledge of revealed truth; or a knowledge of which is necessary in order to the defence of the faith. This more ample knowledge is not in itself and absolutely, nor

is it, by reason of any precept, necessary for all Christians; nay, for many it is morally impossible.

It follows that it is not necessary that all revealed truths should be explicitly proposed to all men for their belief. As with regard to some truths an *implicit faith* suffices on the part of the general faithful, so does there also suffice an *implicit proposition* of such truths.

A truth is said to be *implicitly* believed which is not *in itself* conceived or known as revealed; but which is contained in another truth, which one explicitly knows and believes.

This other truth may be the formal object or motive of faith itself, namely, the authority of God revealing; and in this way the faithful make a general act of faith when they say, "I believe whatever God, the Infinite Truth, has revealed."

Or again, it may be the Church, as proposing the Divine revelation; and so they make an act of faith when they say, "I believe whatever the Church believes and teaches."

Or it may be some material object of faith or article of faith explicitly believed, in which another truth, although not in itself explicitly known, is yet included.

One such object or article of faith may be contained in another, so as that, without any further revelation, it might be deduced from that other. Thus he who explicitly believes a thing defined

implicitly believes all the parts of its definition, and all things essential in order to its definition. He who believes an universal proposition believes implicitly all the particular propositions comprehended under it; and he who believes a complete proposition believes in each of its component parts.

On the other hand, one object or article of faith may be contained in another, so as that, without revelation, the human reason could not understand that it is so comprehended; either because its comprehension, although in itself necessary, is yet beyond the reach of human reason, or because it is not necessary in itself, but is dependent on the free will of God.

As an illustration of the former, he who believes in one true God believes implicitly in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost. As an illustration of the latter, he who believes in the redemption through Christ believes in the death of Christ; and he who believes in the remission of sins believes in the necessity of the sacraments of Baptism and Penance.

A distinction between various classes of revealed truths according to their subject-matter we find in the Sacred Scriptures. St. Paul told the Corinthians that when he came to them he came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring to them the testimony of Christ, and that he judged not himself to

know anything among them but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. "Howbeit," says he, "we speak wisdom among the perfect, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, the profound things of God." "I could not, brethren," he writes, "speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, as to little ones in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not meat, for you were not able as yet, and neither indeed are you now able, for you are yet carnal, and walk according to man." And again, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." To the Hebrews also he says, "Of Christ we have great things to say, and hard to be intelligibly uttered, because you are become weak to hear; for whereas for the time you ought to be masters, you have need to be taught again what are the first rudiments of the Word of God, and you are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food; for every one that is a partaker of milk is unskilful in the word of justice, for he is a little child; but solid food is for the perfect, for those who by use have their senses exercised to the discerning of good and evil: wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to things more perfect." To the Thessalonians he wrote that night and day he prayed more abundantly that he might see their face, and might accomplish those things that were wanting to their faith.

The same distinction of truths is also manifest

from the difference, always recognised in the Church, between the simple faith necessary for all men and the Christian wisdom or *gnosis*, which has not only more express and clear knowledge of the same truths which are known more confusedly by the simple faithful; but embraces also, with an explicit knowledge, a number of truths which it is sufficient that others should only implicitly believe. It is apparent also from the prudent economy which was always used in the instruction of catechumens, and of mixed congregations.

Supposing, then, this distinction between certain classes of truths,—by reason of the difference between them, not as to the formal motive for believing them, which is in all cases one, namely, the authority of God revealing, but as to the greater or less dignity or necessity of the matters to be believed, —we come to consider the diversity which exists in the manner of the apostolic teaching and tradition.

We have seen in the preceding chapter that nothing belongs to the deposit of the Catholic faith which was not contained in the doctrine delivered by Christ and by the Holy Ghost through the apostles to the Church.

But it follows from the distinction which, in this chapter, we have established, that it is not necessary, and that it was not to be looked for, that all those truths should, in one and the same

way, be set forth either in the preaching of the primitive ages or in the tradition of every age.

Those things which have explicitly to be known and believed by all the faithful were certainly as explicitly set forth in the apostolic doctrine, and have been contained in the tradition of every age —*clearly* so far as the circumstances of the time demanded clearness, and *expressly* by diligent and instant preaching.

Among those things, on the other hand, which belong to a fuller, a deeper, and a clearer understanding of the faith, there may be some which are contained in the apostolic teaching *implicitly*, and which, for some period of time at least, have been transmitted by tradition, by being *implicitly* contained in other doctrines explicitly preached and known.

There may also be other truths contained in tradition which are more obscurely proposed, and less expressly and instantly preached, until the circumstances of the times and the controversies which arise demand, and the direction of the Holy Ghost through the divine teaching authority effects, an unfolding of the implicit, a declaration and illustration of the obscure, and an express and instant preaching, or a definition of that which had hitherto been less expressly taught.

From the almost infinite relations which divine doctrines have to the exigencies of every age, and

the oppositions which they contain to the most diverse errors, and this in proportion to the profundity of the doctrines, it is evident that every single doctrine, in all its aspects and relations, was not, and morally could not have been, explicitly proposed and declared by the apostles.

This was the less necessary inasmuch as, along with doctrine, the special grace of truth, in order to the application and explanation of doctrine according to the needs of successive ages, was, in virtue of the promises and institution of Christ, to be transmitted from the apostles to their successors.

Hence in the apostolic preaching there might have been proposed certain *universal* propositions, in which were implicitly contained *singular* propositions, which should in course of time, and when doubts arose as to their meaning, be explained by the divine authority of the Church. In this way the doctrine of the necessity of grace for every good work, meritorious of eternal salvation, sufficed that afterwards might be defined, against the Semipelagians, the same necessity in order to the beginnings of faith.

Again, the apostolic preaching might have contained certain *complex* propositions, of which the constituent elements should have afterwards to be unfolded. For instance, from the proposition—Christ is God and Man,—might, as necessity arose,

be defined many things concerning both His natures; or from the proposition—Peter has supreme power as foundation and visible head of the Church and centre of unity,—might be defined many of his particular rights and offices.

So also there may have been many matters at the first but *obscurely* and *confusedly* understood by the faithful, which should, as time went on, be applied so as to be more particularly and distinctly understood; such as many prophecies of the future contained in the Apocalypse, which may perhaps not be distinctly understood until after their event.

There may have been also matters very *simply* enunciated, a more definite declaration of which, in direct opposition to certain erroneous doctrinal expressions, subsequent heresies might, as they arose, render necessary.

Hence the rise of certain terms and modes of expression consecrated by the use of Fathers and Councils, and of ecclesiastical formulas which became, as it were, *tesseræ* and touchstones of the faith. Thus, by way of example, we have the *Consubstantial* of Nicæa, which secures the divinity of Christ; the *Theotokos* of Ephesus, which connotes the singleness and divinity of His person; the term *Transubstantiation*, defined at Trent to signify the mode of His real presence in the Eucharist; and the *Deus Auctor Scripturæ* of Florence, of Trent, and of the Vatican, from which we have drawn

the idea of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.

And finally, some doctrines may have been proposed more by the *use* and *practice* and *custom* of the Church, than by way of express preaching; as to which, in course of time, express teaching or a solemn definition might become necessary.

Examples of this we find in the controversies as to the power of validly conferring sacraments outside the Church, and in the history of the canon of the Sacred Scriptures.

It is manifest, then, that there *may have been* truths objectively comprehended in the deposit of faith, which yet were not always sufficiently proposed by the clear teaching of the Church, so as to induce an obligation of explicit Catholic faith, or of universal explicit belief in them.

That there *were*, in fact, such truths, is shewn by all those definitions of Pontiffs and Councils which have declared to be truths of faith, doctrines as to which, before their definition, Catholic Doctors, without prejudice to their faith or Catholic com munion, held diverse opinions; agreeing always in this, that such doctrines did not yet pertain to the deposit of faith as sufficiently made manifest, and so as necessarily to be believed.

There are, moreover, even now, several theological questions not yet defined, and advisedly left unsolved by Pontiffs and Councils; which, how-

ever, concern the sense of certain points of revealed doctrine, so as that they may yet be resolved by an analysis of that doctrine, and defined by infallible authority.

The unity of the faith is preserved in its entirety so long as there is no divergence from the *proximate* rule of faith, that is, from the divine teaching authority of the Catholic Church. It is not destroyed, injured, or imperilled by controversy, or even by the denial of Catholic Doctors of a doctrine really contained in the *remote* rule of faith, that is to say, in Scripture and Tradition, but which has not as yet been sufficiently proposed by the *proximate* rule of faith,—that is, by the Catholic Church.

We have a notable example of this in the error of those who denied the validity of baptism conferred by heretics, and maintained the necessity of rebaptism. The result of the definition of that controversy is strikingly described in the words of Vincent of Lerins: "O marvellous change! The authors of the opinion are reckoned Catholics, and their followers heretics; the masters are acquitted, their disciples are condemned; the men who wrote the books shall be children of the kingdom; the upholders of the books shall have their place in hell."

His words equally apply to and are a fitting commentary on events in our own day. They recall the situation before and after the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception and the decrees

of the Vatican Council. Before these, controversy was possible as to certain points contained in the *remote* rule of faith; such controversy is now impossible, and has ceased by the submission of all to the *proximate* rule of faith, the teaching of the Catholic and Roman Church.

It may perhaps be well to caution our readers that by what we have said as to certain truths being *implicitly* contained in the apostolic preaching, of which truths a farther declaration became necessary in course of time, and in opposition to various forms of error, as these arose, we by no means imply that there was a less perfect understanding of the faith in the Apostles than in the Fathers or subsequent Doctors.

It is one thing to say that the Apostles did not propose the doctrines of faith under all the forms by which they might have been enunciated, in direct opposition to the manifold errors of later times; and that therefore definitions of the same doctrines in other terms, by other modes of expression, and with new explanations accommodated to the exigencies of various ages, might become necessary: and quite another to say that the Apostles themselves knew less distinctly than did later Doctors the doctrines of faith in all their intrinsic fulness. Their knowledge of these was perfect and explicit so far as concerned the intrinsic meaning of the doctrines; and this in virtue not of an acquired knowledge,

but of that infused knowledge which was divinely bestowed upon them in order to their office of first promulgators of the Christian religion.

Neither, in like manner, does what we have said in any way contradict the famous canon of Vincent of Lerins, understood in its true sense. The words of that canon are: "In the Catholic Church we are to take the greatest care that we hold that which has been believed *everywhere*, *always*, and *by all;* for this is what is truly and properly Catholic. And this we shall do if we follow *universality*, *antiquity*, and *consent*."

This canon is most true in its *affirmative* sense, namely, that a doctrine which has these characteristics is certainly a doctrine of Catholic faith; but it would not be true if understood in an *exclusive* sense, as if no doctrine pertained to the deposit of faith which had not been always and everywhere *explicitly* believed by all.

Absolute antiquity or *apostolicity* is not proposed by Vincent as a *note* of catholicity of doctrine; it is, on the contrary, the *fact* to be inquired into. The notes whereby that apostolicity is to be known are the two properties—*universality*, or the present consent of the Church, and the *consent of antiquity*, that is, of *relative* antiquity, or the consent previous to the rise of controversy. From these two notes, or either of them, the fact of *absolute antiquity* or *apostolicity* is argued and made manifest.

Having established the *fact*, we come now to consider the *mode* of the unfolding of the divine deposit.

In order rightly and clearly to understand this, we must keep in view the union in the Apostles and in their successors of the two offices of guardians of the divine deposit and of teachers of the revealed doctrine which it contains.

This follows from what we have seen in a previous chapter, that the idea of divine tradition is not satisfied by the preservation of certain formulas of faith, but that it requires a perpetual, infallible preservation also of the true sense and understanding of the divine doctrine contained in the deposit. This could not be so preserved unless the guardians of the faith were at the same time the infallible teachers of that faith. We cannot regard infallible guardians of the deposit as divinely instituted, without also and thereby regarding them as divinely instituted its infallible teachers; since by means of this divinely authoritative teaching the custody of the deposit is exercised and accomplished. The two offices of guardians and teachers may be distinguished, but they cannot be separated.

Hence we find St. Paul, while separating other offices which differ as to the persons who fulfil them and as to their functions, connecting these two by a conjunctive particle. "Some," says he to the Ephesians, "Christ gave to be apostles, and

some prophets, and others evangelists, and others pastors *and* teachers."

So also in his exhortation to Timothy against the evil men and seducers who err and drive into error, he sets before him the Sacred Scriptures as an instrument of doctrine, to be used in the keeping of those things which he had learned, and which had been committed to him; "for all Scripture," says he, "divinely inspired, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished unto every good work." He exhorts him, in another place, rightly to handle the word of truth, and to attend to reading and to doctrine, that so doing he might both save himself and them that heard him. And this was that Timothy to whom he said, "O Timothy! keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of words, and oppositions of science falsely so called. Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me. Keep the good deposited in trust to thee by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us."

From this union of these two offices, or from this, that the office of guardians of the faith has been so instituted by Christ as that it should be exercised and accomplished through their function as teachers, and that without this it cannot be fulfilled, it is evident that the same principle which confers infallibility in the guardian-

ship of the deposit confers the same infallibility in the teaching function.

All, therefore, that demonstrates the promised care of Christ, and the direction and assistance of the Spirit of Truth, so as that the Apostles and their successors should always and to the end of the world infallibly preserve in its entirety the deposit of faith, demonstrates also that this care, direction, and assistance form the efficient cause whereby the guardians of the deposit are, under the same conditions under which they are infallible in their guardianship, rendered infallible also in their explaining, in their more clearly proposing, and in their more distinctly defining revealed truths.

This assistance and direction of the Spirit of Truth is, as we have seen, not by way of new revelations. It not only does not exclude, but it supposes a human element in enquiry, in study, and in acquired knowledge.

What gives extrinsic *occasion* for farther explanation, for clearer proposition, or for more strict definition of doctrine, is generally the rise of controversy, error, or heresy.

The direct *preparation* is very various. To it belongs, as a human element, acquired knowledge in the several branches of sacred learning, study of the scriptures, of the fathers, liturgies, rites, and ecclesiastical customs, and of theology generally. It includes also the subsidiary aid of merely human

learning. This human element of preparation is never to be regarded apart, but, as it is always, under the special providence and direction of the Holy Ghost; and so even in this preparation the human element, although it may be distinguished from the divine, can never be wholly separated from it.

The result of this preparation is the authoritative proposition of the doctrine, when it is explicitly, clearly, and expressly proposed for belief. Here also the human element has place. The assistance of the Holy Ghost directs the human organs divinely instituted, and their labours, to a definition of revealed truth, and assists them in their inquiry so as that they never come to a definition save according to the genuine sense contained in the objective revelation. Hence it belongs to the providence and direction of the Holy Ghost to effect that there should be always *sufficient* human diligence in the process of arriving at a definition of faith. But the infallibility of the definition rests wholly and absolutely on the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost; and does not depend on the perfection of the human element, be it diligence of inquiry, completeness of theological knowledge, or any human industry whatsoever.

CHAPTER XII.

THE AUTHORITATIVE VERSION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

An important question has yet to be discussed, and it demands an answer, viz., Which is the authoritative version of the Sacred Scriptures ? or, Does there exist any version of the Sacred Scriptures which has a special authority of its own, and this authority greater than that of any other version ?

To answer this question we must first have a clear idea of what we mean, and what is to be understood by the *authority* or *authenticity* of a book or document.

A book or document is said to be authentic or authoritative when it is of such a nature as to demand or secure for itself credence. If it is a public instrument, that is, an instrument belonging to or affecting a public society, then, in order that it should be authentic or authoritative, it must be of such a character as to compel public credence, or the belief of the whole society.

The authority of the original document or *auto-*

graph we may call *original authenticity;* and this depends upon the authority of him who was its principal author.

If we are clear and certain as to his authority, the question as to the original authenticity of the document is one with the question as to its *genuineness.* Hence authenticity and genuineness have frequently been taken as if they were synonymous; or at least there has been confusion in the use of those two terms, as if either might stand indifferently for one idea. But the idea of authenticity and the idea of genuineness are not in themselves the same.

Supposing the original authenticity of a document, there may be a question as to the authenticity of its copies or of its versions; in other words, as to the authenticity of the *apograph,* as distinguished from the *autograph.*

If the original document is itself authentic, then all its copies have the same intrinsic authenticity, supposing their conformity with it. This we may call, to distinguish it from *original* authenticity,—*authenticity of conformity.* This authenticity of conformity, supposing the original authenticity of the autograph, is equivalent to *integrity,* that is, to exclusion of interpolation or corruption in the copies, and to *fidelity* in the versions.

But if the original document is itself lacking in authority, then the integrity of the copies and the

fidelity of the versions cannot, save improperly, be called authenticity.

With regard to the Sacred Scriptures, their original authenticity or divine authority arises from their divine inspiration, and the fact that God was their principal author. Demonstration, therefore, of their inspiration is demonstration of their divine original authenticity; and demonstration of the canon of the Sacred Scriptures is demonstration of the original authenticity of all the books comprehended in that canon.

The belief and definition of the Church, when she believes and proposes the canon of the sacred books, not only declares the primitive fact of inspiration, or that there existed at the beginning inspired books known by the names ascribed to them; but that belief and definition relates to the Scriptures as now at the present time existing in the Church of God. Hence the definition of the canon declaring certain determinate scriptures to be inspired includes two things,—first, that the books known by certain names were inspired at the first by God; and, secondly, that the books which we have in the Church now are the same as those written then under such inspiration. In other words, the belief and definition of the Church has for its object both the original authenticity of the sacred books, and their authenticity of conformity.

Another distinction which we must keep in view is that between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* authenticity.

Intrinsic authenticity is that authority which is in a writing or instrument from its origin, and from the fact of its conformity with the authentic original. Extrinsic authenticity is intrinsic authenticity as it is made manifest. Intrinsic authenticity is therefore presupposed by and included in extrinsic authenticity. Hence both original authenticity and authenticity of conformity may be either intrinsic only, or they may be at once both intrinsic and extrinsic; but there cannot be extrinsic authenticity without that intrinsic authenticity which it supposes and makes manifest.

As regards the Sacred Scriptures, their intrinsic original authenticity is constituted by their inspiration. It is manifested, and so becomes extrinsic authenticity, by divine testimony.

Now supposing original authenticity, there may be a question as to authenticity of conformity in a recension or version. This, if intrinsic authenticity, is the fact of conformity with the authentic primitive text, independently of any manifestation or declaration. Its extrinsic authenticity is the result of such manifestation; and this may be either *public* or *private*.

Private documents, which belong in no way to a public society, have extrinsic authenticity in only a scientific sense, and not in a juridical

sense. Such authenticity consequently can be demonstrated only scientifically by means of history and criticism.

But if the writings are public instruments,—that is, such as a society or public body makes use of, is regulated by, and acknowledges as embodying its laws,—their intrinsic authenticity might indeed be made manifest historically and critically, but such manifestation would not constitute the extrinsic authenticity, as such, which belongs to public instruments. Their authority should be public, that is, it should be such as to come home to and oblige the whole society; while such a manifestation of intrinsic authority as is made by means of history or criticism would be private, that is, it would come home only to the few, and present itself to the intelligence merely of individuals. Hence the extrinsic authenticity, properly so called, of a public instrument is constituted only by an express or equivalent declaration made by the public authority of the society to whom the instrument belongs.

Now, the Sacred Scriptures being a public instrument of the Church, consigned to it by God, any recension or version of them, if it be in conformity with the original written at the first under the inspiration of God, is intrinsically authentic. If such conformity were merely scientifically demonstrated, and so known to those only who were

capable of appreciating such a demonstration, it might indeed be called a *private extrinsic authenticity*, or a *critical authenticity*, but it would not be a *public* extrinsic authenticity. Such an authenticity could be constituted only by a declaration of conformity made by the Church itself as a public body, either expressly by definite statement, or equivalently through her constant public use.

It follows, therefore, that the declaration of the Church does not *effect*, but *supposes* and *makes manifest* that which already exists,—the *original authenticity*, or inspiration of Scripture, as well as the *intrinsic* authenticity of conformity of the copies and versions.

What the declaration of the Church either expressly or equivalently does effect is,—their *extrinsic public* authenticity.

Further, although the extrinsic authenticity of a recension or of a version of Holy Scripture may be already constituted by the public use of the Church, and thereby also its intrinsic authenticity of conformity made manifest, yet circumstances may render an express declaration of such authenticity and of its degree useful and even necessary; just as, in other cases, circumstances may, as they not unfrequently do, render opportune or necessary a solemn definition of doctrines already sufficiently certain from the fact that they form part of the ordinary teaching of the Church.

Again, supposing that a recension or a version of the Sacred Scriptures should for any long time have ceased to be in the public use of the Catholic Church, and that so there should have ceased to be this guarantee against the introduction of errors into it, there would cease to be the same public certainty for its extrinsic authenticity which there was before.

In none of the Protestant sects can there be any *authority*, properly so called, simply because they are not, in any true sense, *societies*. Were it otherwise, they would be practically faithless to their own fundamental principle, which is that of private judgment and the rule of the individual.

Hence among Protestants there can be no extrinsic public authenticity given to the Sacred Scriptures. The Scriptures cannot, on Protestant principles, be public instruments of a legal society; they are merely writings destined for individuals. Any judgment, then, as to their sense, or as to their authenticity, can be merely *scientific*, the work of scholars, and possible to the few. The great majority of Protestants, being necessarily incapable of appreciating scientific demonstration, must therefore take the authenticity of Scripture, if at all, on the authority of critics, and so on authority which is *merely human*.

To the Catholic and Roman Church, as it is a

divine institution, possessing a divine authority, it belongs, in its office of guardian of the revealed deposit of divine truths, not merely to define the canon of the Sacred Scriptures, but to declare the authenticity of any particular version or recension of the Scriptures.

The promised assistance of the Holy Ghost in order to the infallible custody of the deposit of faith extends to the infallible proposition of the canonical books which together form the written word; and the infallibility which is the result of that assistance prevents the peril of any human word being proposed for the divine word, or of any human books being proposed to the faithful as divine books.

To the same Church, and for the same reason, belongs also infallible judgment, whether what is set forth as the written word of God under a certain form or in a certain edition or version be that word as inspired at the first; that is to say, whether that edition or version is in conformity with its original prototype.

If an edition or version of the Sacred Scriptures authenticated by the Catholic Church were really to lack conformity with the books written at the first under divine inspiration, or if this were to be the case with any class of texts contained therein, then there would be proposed to the faithful a human word for the divine word, as much as if those

books or texts had been humanly written at the first, and were afterwards defined to be divinely written.

Briefly, it is the office of the Church of God not only to deliver the abstract doctrine that there exists an inspired word, but also to propose the written word itself in the concrete under a certain determinate form. She has, therefore, the right of designating a recension or version as genuine scripture, and so in conformity with the primitive text, especially in all that pertains to faith or morals; and if such authoritative version or recension should not exist, then she has the right of making one and proposing it to the faithful.

Again, supposing that there has been for a long time in the public use of the Church such a recension or version of the Sacred Scriptures, and consecrated by such use as was the Latin Vulgate at the date of the Council of Trent, then in a solemn definition of the canon of Scripture there is contained an indirect definition of the authenticity of such a version.

But the Council of Trent did more. It expressly referred its definition of the canon to the books as they existed in the Latin Vulgate. Its words are, "If any receive not as sacred and canonical the entire books with all their parts, as they have been wont to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Vulgate Latin edition, let him be anathema."

The Church, in arriving at her judgments, is directed not by means of new revelations, but by the assistance of the Holy Ghost; and so the human element of inquiry and examination of the grounds for such a judgment enters into the process. This may be either by way of a new historical enquiry into the apostolic tradition, or by way of appeal to the known doctrine and practice of the Universal Church, which, as we have seen, forms a certain criterion of the apostolic tradition.

Hence, in framing the decree as to the authenticity of the Latin Vulgate, the Fathers of Trent might have instituted a new critical examination. This, however, they held to be neither necessary nor opportune. There was the public and solemn dogmatic, liturgical, and polemical use by the whole Western Church, for at least nine centuries, of the Latin Vulgate; and that supplied a foundation for a judgment which, much more than any new critical examination, both became the dignity and was in accordance with the practice of the Church. A new critical examination could have led to no other conclusion than that which the testimony of centuries supplied. Hence, not only was the assistance of the Holy Ghost the active principle preventing the Fathers of the Council from error in their judgment; but the same assistance, as it is perpetual in the Church, was to

them the objective principle of their knowledge on which their judgment was founded.

We have spoken of the testimony of centuries. It consists in this manifest fact, that certainly from the sixth century, or at least from the eighth, all the arguments as to the sacred books, their solemn use, the citations of Fathers and Doctors, and the canons of Scripture, had in the Western Church *immediate* relation, and in the Universal Church relation *mediately* to the Sacred Scriptures under their form of the Vulgate edition. In the Western Church the Scriptures were not in public use under any other form. When they were read, quoted, or enumerated, there was *immediate* reference to them as they are contained in that edition. But, besides this, there was a *mediate* proposition of the Vulgate made by the Universal Church, as the necessary result of its union with its head, the Roman Pontiff, of the principality and supremacy of the Roman Church, and of the communion, consent, and approbation of all the Churches. The very same arguments which exhibit the books as sacred and divine, so exhibit them as they are contained in that edition.

We have, then, the *theoretical* testimony of the Universal Church for ages; we have also its *practical* testimony, that is, the testimony of its practice, for the same period, and that not less complete. From the date we have men-

tioned, not only in the Councils of the Western Bishops, but also in the Councils which included both Western and Eastern Bishops, in the decrees of Pontiffs, and in the admonitions of pastors, in the refuting of heresies, in the instruction of the faithful, in the sacred liturgy, in dogmatic, polemical, and moral writers, and in the schools, the Scriptures were taken and understood as they stand in the Vulgate edition; and on them, as therein contained, was alone or chiefly founded throughout the whole Western Church the explanation of the faith and of the moral law.

Certainly, therefore, either there was throughout the whole Church, and that for many ages, a merely human foundation supposed as a divine foundation for the fabric of faith and morals; or the Scriptures, as they exist in the Vulgate version, are the sincere written Word of God, at least as to their sum, and in all that pertains to their principal scope. The Vulgate version is, therefore, so far, at any rate, in conformity with the primitive text of the inspired books. The former hypothesis is repugnant to the essential constitution of the Church and to the perpetual assistance of the Holy Ghost promised by Christ; and therefore that public and constant use is a certain criterion of *authenticity of conformity* in the Vulgate version.

Having established the *fact* of the authenticity of the Vulgate edition, we come now to consider

the *measure* of the authenticity ascribed to it by the Church in the Council of Trent.

We must clear the way by observing the distinction which exists between two classes of texts in the Sacred Scriptures.

There are, in the first place, certain matters relating to God, to the end of man, to the means whereby he is ordained towards that end, to the principles and rules of morals, facts also on which the economy of the divine revelation rests, or which are in a special manner connected therewith, and many things besides which may be comprehended under the general formula of the Council of Trent as matters of faith and morals which pertain to the building up of the Christian doctrine.

Now, to inspire the passages which contain such matters, and so by means of Scripture to propose them to the human race, was, as it were, of the *principal intention* of God as the Author of the sacred books. These truths were themselves the motives of inspiration. They were committed to writing by inspiration, for their own sake, and because of their own character, and not because of their connection with other truths.

But, besides these, we find in the Sacred Scriptures many other matters which, although they are most certainly the Word of God—for all Scripture is inspired of God—yet differ from the

former class in this, that they were inspired not for their own sake, or, as it were, of the principal intention of the Divine Author, but because of their historical and logical connection with those truths which were inspired for their own sake.

Within this second class fall many such matters as pertain to history, geography, physical science, zoology, botany, mineralogy; such also as relate to ordinary life, prudence, and morals of the natural and civil order, and the like; and matters introduced for the embellishment of ideas revealed and inspired for their own sake. The passages which contain such truths are sometimes called *non-dogmatic*, not absolutely, but in comparison with the passages which contain truths of the former class; which are called *dogmatic* passages or texts, as containing and expressing truths revealed or inspired for their own sake.

This distinction into these two classes is obvious to the reader of the Sacred Scriptures, for who can doubt but that such texts as treat of the mysteries of the Trinity of Divine Persons and of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of the institution of the sacraments, of the resurrection of the body, of the fall of Adam, of the call of Abraham and Moses, of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the like, enunciate truths revealed and inspired for their own sake; and so, that such passages are, in an eminent sense, *dogmatic?* On

the other hand, who can fail to see that such facts as that, at the generation of Seth, Adam had lived 130 years, that the precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest were those named, that the number of the slain after the idolatry of the golden calf was 23,000, that the bush under which Jonas slept was an ivy bush, that the city of Raguel was called Rages, and the like, belong to a class of matters not revealed or inspired for their own sake?

That this distinction is a real one, and one to be used in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, is indicated also by the expression of the Council of Trent in its condemnation of those who twist the Sacred Scriptures to their own sense, contrary to that sense which the Church has held and holds, "in matters of faith and morals, which pertain to the building up of Christian doctrine." The same distinction is no less clearly expressed by the words of the Vatican Council.

The dogmatic decree of the Council of Trent, which declares the canonical authority of all the books of the Sacred Scriptures, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate edition, thereby declares that edition to be authentic,—not merely indeterminately, as if the books which it contains were on the whole identical with the original; but also

specially to this extent, that in those passages of it which of themselves relate to faith or morals, the original Word of God is sincerely set forth, according to the substance of the doctrine.

But it does not declare the authenticity of the Vulgate version in such a degree of perfection, as that every single passage of the number of those which of themselves do not belong to the building up of Christian doctrine, must be held as, in the manner of its expression, in precise and literal conformity with the original text. Still less does it ascribe any irreformable character to the edition of the Vulgate version, as corrected by order of the Roman Pontiff.

The Trent Decree does not designate any copy or codex, but speaks of the old edition approved by the long use of so many ages in the Church. A dogmatic text, therefore, in the Clementine edition, although for many reasons it may be presumed to belong to that old edition so approved, yet if it could be shown that it was not contained therein, its conformity with the primitive Scripture would not have been established by this Decree.

In virtue of the Decree, we believe that a doctrine which stands expressed in the Old Latin Vulgate was also contained in the primitive Scripture; but we do not maintain that it was there expressed in the same manner, so long as the result is the same. Hence we do not say that

there can be no error of translation, so long as it is of such a kind as should not change the substance of the doctrine expressed. Thus no one would thereby reject the authenticity of the Vulgate as declared by the Council of Trent, who should, as regards even certain dogmatic texts, maintain that another reading was the true one, supposing always that by that other reading the same doctrine was expressed, although not precisely in the same way. We find similar varieties as to mode of expression in the quotations made by the Apostles themselves from the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Further, we do not maintain, in virtue of the Trent Decree, that no dogmatic text existed in the original Scriptures, which is not now found in the Latin Vulgate; or even that the existence of a text in the Greek or Hebrew versions, which is not also in the Vulgate, would of itself necessarily prove interpolation in those versions.

But we do maintain that no dogmatic text is to be found in the Latin Vulgate, which was not also contained in the original Scriptures. It cannot be that the Holy Ghost should permit an edition to be proposed as authentic which contains a spurious text; for thereby a spurious text would be proposed to the faithful as Sacred and Canonical Scripture, or, in other words, as Divinely inspired; the written word of man would be declared to be the written Word of God.

The Decree defining the authenticity of the Vulgate has in no way interfered with the authenticity of the Hebrew and Greek texts. Their extrinsic authority remains precisely the same as it was before. Their authenticity can with certainty be established, not only critically and historically, but dogmatically also, so far as concerns the substance of their contents; and both texts are of the greatest value as means in order to arrive at the genuine sense and full force of many passages of the Latin Vulgate.

The authenticity of the Vulgate, which has been dogmatically declared, supposes the authenticity of the Hebrew and Greek texts, at least as these exist in all their copies. But their authenticity differs from the authenticity of the Vulgate in two ways. In the first place, the Catholic and Roman Church has not exercised the same vigilance with regard to them; and for many centuries they have not been in the same public use. Secondly, and principally, besides that foundation of extrinsic authenticity which, in their measure, they have in common with the Vulgate, namely, the use of centuries in the Catholic Church, the Vulgate has that solemn and public dogmatic definition of authenticity which they do not possess.

The Vulgate edition, therefore, in this sense, stands alone, and has its own place as the authoritative version of the Sacred Scriptures.

CHAPTER XIII.

HUMAN APPREHENSION OF DIVINE REVELATION.

Our consideration of the Written Word, as an instrument of doctrine in the hands of that Divine Teacher, by means of whose ministry men are taught of God, would scarcely be complete were we to omit consideration of what is required on our part in order that we may avail ourselves of that Revelation which God has placed within our reach.

Hitherto we have been considering the faith *which* we believe, its sources, organs, and instruments; we come now to consider the faith *whereby* we believe, and its intrinsic principles.

How does man apprehend, embrace, and so avail himself of a Word which God has uttered?

Three previous questions suggest themselves in order to an adequate answer to this general question. The first is, as to the necessity not only of a revelation, but of a corresponding supernatural faith on the part of man, in order to his attainment of his last end in the supernatural order. The second is, as to the constituents and conditions of the faith so required.

The third is, as to the position of the Church as a means in order to divine faith on the part of man.

1. The last end of the rational creature cannot be constituted save in such a knowledge of God the Supreme Truth, and in such a love of God the Supreme Good, as shall fully satisfy the destination of his understanding and will towards their proper objects, that is, the objects towards which they of their nature tend,—the true and the good. This knowledge and love must be such as that by means of them man should attain to his ultimate perfection, and to his complete beatitude.

Such a knowledge and such a love may, however, be of two kinds; corresponding to two possible estates, in either of which man might have been constituted by his Maker.

There might have been such a knowledge and love as was adequately accommodated to his powers and faculties in their *natural* perfection; but which did not exceed the limits of that which his created rational nature demanded.

Or, again, there might have been a knowledge and love such as should transcend every exigence of his nature, and of his natural powers and faculties, and such as could be made possible only by means of a superadded and supernatural gift. This gift would be a singular participation or assimilation of that Divine light wherewith God sees Himself. By means of this the created under-

standing would be elevated to beholding the Divine Essence, as it is the Infinite Truth, intuitively, clearly, and in itself; and the created will would be at the same time supernaturally elevated so as to love the same Divine Essence, as it is the Infinite Good, with a love corresponding to that intuitive vision of the understanding. In this way the rational creature would be supremely blessed with a supernatural beatitude by a *supernatural* enjoyment of God.

The last end of man, on the first hypothesis, would be a *natural* end. Supposing his creation, moreover, it would be consequent not on a free destination of God, distinct and diverse from His will to create him as man, and with that human nature the possession of which constitutes him man; but consequent from the necessary perfection of God Himself, and from the constituent and so necessary perfections of man as he is a rational creature.

Hence this end might be known to man by the light of reason, from the perfections of God, as they are manifested in the works of His creation, and from the perfections of man himself, which he knows that he possesses.

On the other hypothesis, the last end of man would be a *supernatural* end. To such an end, even supposing his creation, he need not have been destined; and, if raised to such an end, it would be only in virtue of the free bounty of God.

The existence of such an end, therefore, and of man's destiny thereto, he could know only through the revelation of God, and by means of faith.

Now, if man is constituted by God in the way towards such a supernatural end, the estate of this way must necessarily bear some proportion to the estate of that end. The means whereby he is directed towards it must correspond and be adapted to the end for which they are ordained. His dispositions both of understanding and of will, as they are preparations for the attainment of that end, must belong, by way of beginning, to that supernatural order, of which the vision and enjoyment of God is the consummation and end.

Since, therefore, in the present order of the Providence of God, man has not been left to his merely natural destiny, but has been raised to the destiny of a supernatural end, and placed in the way towards the ultimate attainment of this end, a merely natural knowledge, and a merely natural love corresponding to such natural knowledge, will not suffice. A knowledge and love directed towards a supernatural end must themselves be supernatural likewise.

They must be supernatural, in the first place *subjectively*, that is,—by reason of the principle which shall elicit acts of such knowledge and love; and of the forces which, superadded to the natural understanding and will, fit those faculties for the eliciting

of supernatural acts proportioned to a supernatural end.

They must be supernatural also *objectively*, that is,—besides the manifestation of God which exists through the works of His creation, and which corresponds to the natural end of man, there is required another and an immediate manifestation of God, which shall correspond to the final manifestation face to face, whereby we shall see Him as He is.

This manifestation of God, made now in the estate of the way, is not such as that thereby we should now see Him as He is; for such intuitive vision is the end, and not a means or preparation towards the end. But the present revelation is by a testimony of God Himself, whereby truth, as known by Him, is made known to us. To this revelation on the part of God there corresponds on our part, not vision, but *faith*.

Man, says St. Thomas, has a threefold knowledge of divine things; the first, in that, by the natural light of his reason, and through creatures, he ascends to a knowledge of God; the second, in as much as divine truth, which surpasses human understanding, descends to us by way of revelation, not as demonstrated in order that we should see it, but as by an uttered word in order that we should believe it; and the third, when the mind of man is raised to a perfect intuition of those things which have been revealed.

The necessity of a divine revelation on the part of God, and of supernatural faith on the part of man is apparent, whether we look to man's supernatural end, or to the means adapted and provided for his attainment of that end.

If man is to be directed towards his supernatural end, in a rational way, that is, in a way in accordance with that rational nature which as man he possesses, and the possession of which constitutes him man, this supernatural end must necessarily be known to him. But this it cannot be save by means of revelation, and of a faith corresponding to that revelation.

If not absolutely necessary, it is at least most in accordance with the character of his supernatural end, that man, who is in the future to possess God by an enjoyment of immediate vision and corresponding love, should now in the present, and while in the way towards this end, know God as God cannot be known simply through the works of His hands, and by the natural light of human reason. He should know not only that which is known of God and clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, as St. Paul says to the Romans, and a knowledge of which corresponds to his natural end; but he should know also what the same Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, calls the *profound* things of God, which correspond to his supernatural end, when he shall

see God as He is, and when he shall know even as also he is known.

These *profound* things of God, as only by a supernatural and immediate vision can they be known to us so as to be *understood* as they are in themselves; so also only on the testimony of God, and by His revelation alone can they be known to us so as to be *believed.*

Hence, even after they have been revealed to our faith, they cannot be understood by the natural light of our understanding in their own intrinsic ideas; since with the creatures from which our understanding receives its knowledge they have no intrinsic connection, so as that the understanding should adequately perceive *what* they are, any more than it can, from its own principles, demonstrate *that* they are.

In a word, they are *mysteries;* and in order to a mystery, two things are required, namely, not only that by the light of reason it cannot be known *that it is;* but also that, after this is known by means of revelation, it cannot be comprehended, or adequately understood *what it is.*

The necessity of a divine revelation on the part of God, and of supernatural faith on the part of man, supposing his elevation to a supernatural destiny, is equally apparent, if we consider the *means* provided in order to his attainment of his supernatural end.

The means proportioned and ordained to a supernatural end are, at least formally as means, themselves necessarily also supernatural.

Now, it is evident that a knowledge of the means is necessary to the man who is tending towards the end. But supernatural means cannot be known to him save by revelation and corresponding faith; and for these reasons. In the first place, some are not necessary in themselves or from the nature of the end, but have been constituted as means by the free will of God. Secondly, some are necessary in themselves, and from the nature of the end towards which they are the means; but that end is itself not known save by revelation, and so knowledge of the means towards it rests also ultimately on revelation. Further, even supposing revelation of the end, its nature is not known in its intrinsic idea; and so it does not follow that, given revelation of the end, there should, without an explicit and special revelation, be known the necessity of even such means as of themselves belong to that end. Still less does it follow that their intrinsic idea and nature should be understood.

But it is not only with regard to mysteries that a revelation is necessary. It is necessary also with regard to certain truths pertaining to religious and moral doctrine, which do not of themselves transcend the limits of the natural powers of the human reason. There are many truths concern-

ing God as He is man's last end, and concerning the means necessary in order to that end, which are themselves intelligible by the natural light of human reason, and apart from any divine revelation. Among such truths are the existence of God, His absolute attributes, the natural ordination of man towards God, the natural law, and the like.

For a revelation as to such natural truths, and a supernatural faith in them, there is a threefold ground of necessity: first, from their connection with superrational truths; secondly, from the manner in which they are to be known; and thirdly, that a knowledge of them may be duly within the reach of all.

The necessity of a revelation of natural truths, and of a supernatural faith with regard to them, is evident by reason of their connection with supernatural truths. Natural truths would have to be known, even on the hypothesis that man had only a natural end assigned to him; and such truths therefore are said to constitute natural religion. Now, as the supernatural end of man is not a negation, but an elevation of his natural end; so also natural religion is not excluded by supernatural revealed religion, but is raised by it to a superior order. Hence natural truths are contained, as at least implicitly revealed, in the revelation of supernatural truths. The latter, therefore, cannot

be revealed without the former being also and in them revealed.

The same necessity of revelation and corresponding faith with regard to natural truths is apparent moreover from the manner in which such truths are to be known. From the relation of such truths to the supernatural end of man, they must be known in a manner proportioned to that end, and so with a supernatural knowledge. But since the mode of supernatural knowledge proper to our present estate of the way is faith, or at least has faith for its foundation, such natural truths are to be believed by faith; and in as much as the mode of our knowledge should correspond with its end, a divine revelation of those truths was necessary.

But there is a farther necessity for a revelation of natural truths, that is, of the truths of natural religion, viz.—in order that a knowledge of them might be within the reach of all.

Revelation is an aid towards a knowledge of truth. Consequently the measure of its necessity is determined by the measure of the impotence to arrive at truth, of those to whom it may be made. Now, in the human race there is no *physical* impotence to arrive at a knowledge of natural truths; for they are called natural or rational truths, because they can be known by the light of nature, or by means of the faculties possessed by man, as he is

a rational creature. There is therefore no *physical* necessity for a revelation of such truths, as there is a physical necessity for a revelation of those supernatural truths, a knowledge of which is necessary in order to man's attainment of his supernatural end.

But for at least the greater part of mankind, and so for the human race generally, the difficulties in the way of arriving at such truths in due time, in all their fulness, with sufficient clearness, and with perfect certainty without admixture of error, are so great as to prevent, in the case at least of the great majority of men, this physical possibility from arriving at its actual result. Such difficulties constitute a *moral* impotence. Corresponding therefore to man's *moral impotence*, there exists a *moral necessity* for a revelation of even natural truths, in order to that sufficient knowledge of them which is required.

We find this distinction expressed in the Sacred Scriptures, in those passages which treat of that manifestation of God which is made to man, through the creatures of God, and by means of the natural light of his reason. They distinguish between the *possibility* of such knowledge and even an imperfect actual knowledge, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *fact* of a sufficient knowledge in order to render to God that worship which is naturally due to Him. The possibility they affirm ;

but they affirm at the same time that men as a whole, although indeed by their own fault, have not arrived at such a sufficient knowledge and at its practical application, and that to succour their infirmity, God has given as a salutary and necessary remedy, the aid of revelation. "Seeing," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "that in the wisdom of God (diffused over all His works) the world by wisdom knew not God (that is, by that human wisdom whereby they might and ought to have known Him), it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." So also to the men of Lystra, when they would have offered sacrifice to him and Barnabas, he said, "O men, why do you these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things to the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; Who, in past generations suffered all nations to walk in their own way; nevertheless, He left not Himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." In his discourse also in the Areopagus at Athens, the same Apostle spoke of God having overlooked the times of ignorance, when men supposed the Creator of the world, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Giver of life and breath and all things, in Whom men live and move and are, to be like unto gold or

silver or stone, the graving of art and device of man.

This same moral impotence of mankind in regard to knowledge is declared also by Solomon in his prayer for wisdom. "Who among men," says he, "is he that can know the counsel of God, or who can think what the will of God is? For the thoughts of mortal men are fearful, and our counsels uncertain. For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth; and with labour do we find the things that are before us. But the things that are in heaven, who shall search out? And who shall know Thy thought, except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above? And so the ways of them that are upon earth may be corrected, and men may learn the things that please Thee. For by wisdom they were healed, whosoever have pleased Thee, O Lord, from the beginning."

2. Having seen the necessity of revelation on the part of God, and of a corresponding faith on the part of man, in order to his attainment of his supernatural end; we come now to consider the constituents and conditions of the faith so required.

Every assent of faith, properly so called, is a *mediate* assent; that is, an assent which rests on a

previous and *immediate* assent to some truth, which is the principle or motive by reason of which the assent of faith is given.

Every assent, therefore, of divine faith, to a revealed truth, rests upon another truth previously known. This truth previously known, and assent to which is immediate, is, in the case of divine faith in revealed truth, twofold. It includes, in the first place, the truth that God is *infallible*, both in *knowing* and in *revealing*,—that He cannot *be deceived*, and that He cannot *deceive*,—in other words, His infinite *knowledge* and *veracity*,—or, in one word, His *authority*. It includes, secondly, the fact that God has revealed a particular truth to be believed. The *authority of God revealing* is, therefore, the reason why we believe, or the formal motive of our faith.

Hence, every act of divine faith necessarily includes assent to three distinct truths;—first, to the truth revealed;—secondly, to the authority of God in revealing;—and thirdly, to the fact that He has actually revealed that particular truth.

But how are we to know the authority of God, and the fact that He has spoken?

Assent to the authority of God revealing, is an immediate assent; it being known not from testimony, as from an extrinsic motive of assent; but from its own intrinsic idea, or, as in the case of first principles, from a knowledge of its terms.

This assent, however, is not a merely natural assent, but, as entering into the act of faith, is elicited in virtue of a superadded supernatural power; since the will, elevated by grace, commands a supreme assent of the understanding, and the understanding cleaves to the truth, not by its merely natural powers, but by the supernatural powers bestowed upon it. This elevation is effected by means of the supernatural infused and permanent habit of faith, along with the transient aid of the actual graces of illumination in the understanding, and of inspiration in the will.

That the assent to the truth of the veracity of God, as this veracity is the principle of faith, must be a supernatural assent, is evident from the fact that upon this assent rests the formal assent of supernatural faith which is elicited by reason of the testimony of God. It could not rest upon a merely natural assent as its foundation; that being of an inferior order, and less firm than itself. Moreover, the assent of faith should be in its entirety supernatural; and this it would not be were it natural in its foundation, that is, as to the knowledge of the veracity of God.

That there are supernatural acts previous to formal and complete faith, and which tend towards that faith, no one can deny without suspicion of Semi-Pelagianism; and therefore there can be no difficulty in understanding that the knowledge

of the authority of God, and that God has spoken, is a supernatural knowledge.

As with regard to our knowledge of the authority of God revealing, so also with regard to our knowledge of the fact that He has spoken; as this knowledge enters into the act of faith, it must be not from extrinsic divine testimony, but from its own intrinsic idea; and it must at the same time be a supernatural knowledge.

When God speaks to men, either immediately, as He spoke to His prophets and first ambassadors, or mediately, as He speaks through them to those to whom He has sent them, He must render His word knowable as a divine word by the men for whom it is destined, by means of certain characteristic notes or seals;—in other words, He must render it possible for men to know that it is God Himself who is speaking. "God," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "hath placed in us the word of reconciliation; we are therefore ambassadors for Christ, God as it were exhorting by us." To the Thessalonians also he writes, "We give thanks to God without ceasing, because that, when you had received from us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but, as it truly is, the word of God, Who worketh in you who have believed."

The signs and marks wherewith the word is, as it were, sealed so as that it should be known to be

the word of God revealing, are manifold supernatural facts and graces which cannot be understood otherwise than as a testimony of God to His word.

St. Luke records in his Acts of the Apostles, that Paul and Barnabas so spoke at Iconium, that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed; and that they stayed there a long time, acting confidently in the Lord, *Who gave testimony to the word of His grace*, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. St. Paul also himself, writing to the Hebrews, says, "We ought more diligently to observe the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? which, having begun to be declared by the Lord, was confirmed to us by them that heard Him, *God also bearing them witness* by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will."

When, therefore, a word of God is proposed to man, so sealed, as it were, with signs and marks of its divine utterance, it is, *not evidently* indeed, but *certainly* knowable to men as a word not of men, but as it truly is, a word of God. It is therefore an object sufficiently proposed, not so as necessarily to *determine* an assent of the understanding, as it would do were it *evident;* but with such certainty as that the will, moved and

strengthened by grace, should with an affection of pious credulity, and from its due homage to the Infinite Truth, command a most firm assent of the understanding, itself also illuminated and strengthened by grace, to the fact that it is God Who has uttered this word, and therein revealed this truth.

This supernatural assent being *immediate*, is not properly and formally an act of faith, which is *mediate*, as having an extrinsic testimony for its motive. This assent has a divine testimony for its motive, but that testimony is known immediately and by itself. As the object, however, of a supernatural assent, this testimony is the principle by means of which, and by reason of which, the truths enunciated by that testimony are believed by a formal act of faith. Thus this assent enters into that act of faith.

That the existence of a divine revelation may be immediately manifest of itself, is more clearly apparent if we consider the twofold nature of a divine utterance.

It consists, first, of the *words* whereby a truth is enunciated; and secondly, of the *facts* whereby those words are exhibited as a divine utterance. As we make known our thoughts by means of words, so also, says St. Augustine, does the Divine power speak by means of facts; and as new and less ordinary words, duly and becom-

ingly dispersed, add splendour to human speech, so in those marvellous facts which signify a truth is the Divine eloquence in a manner more resplendent.

Take, for example, the signs and marks of the Divine revelation in Jesus Christ.

First, there is His whole life, His miracles, His death, and above all, His resurrection. There is His choice of a few poor, lowly, and unlearned men for the work of the conversion of the human race; and the mission of the Holy Ghost regarded in its evident effects. There is the whole history of the human race; and in especial the history of the chosen people of God, with all its supernatural manifestations, as it was a preparation and a pedagogue to lead men to Christ; and the whole subsequent history also of Christianity, as it is an effect flowing forth from Christ Himself. There is the preaching of the Apostles, the marvellous propagation of the Christian religion, means being employed for the end proposed all contrary to those means which men use, and means which, humanly regarded, seem adapted more for hindering than for obtaining the effect desired. There is a mighty and universal effect produced on the human race from no human cause, in face of fire and sword and torments of all kinds raging throughout three centuries and more. There is the conversion of all previously existing ideas of

the theological and moral order; and a change of the whole public and private life of men. There is the fact that all these things were long before foretold and promised. There is the no less marvellous preservation of the whole Christian institution during so many centuries; a morally perpetual sanctity in all ages; a constant heroic exercise in many, and an esteem in all, of virtues never known outside this religion, and a manifestation of supernatural graces by their external effects. All these facts, and many more akin to these are, taken together as belonging to one whole, so many rays wherewith the Word proposed as Divine is resplendent, and whereby it makes manifest its divine origin.

If the Word be considered as it is invested with such signs of its divinity, then evidently the dignity of the reasons for believing it demands from every understanding a firm assent, and excludes all prudent doubt. There is an objective certainty which is reflected on the understanding, from the intrinsic idea of the revelation regarded as one whole, consisting of both words and facts.

But although the reasons which make manifest the existence of a revelation are so many, and so resplendent as *evidently* to exclude all *prudent* doubt; and so, when they are perceived, and at least while they are being actually considered, an assent of the understanding is compelled to this

truth—that prudently and without fear of error, the existence of a revelation may and *must* be held; and so, therefore, that the understanding does not remain free to form this other judgment —that the existence of a revelation may *prudently* be doubted; nevertheless the existence of the revelation does not thereby become *evident*, but remains only *objectively certain.*

The manifestation of the reasons for believing is not clear in such a degree as to exclude even the possibility of an imprudent doubt. The liberty of the understanding, therefore, is not taken away, so as that it should be necessarily compelled to this judgment—the revelation exists. Hence, the understanding remaining undetermined to giving, or to denying its assent, has to be inclined by the will towards one or the other. If, however, perceiving the reasons for believing, it denies its assent, it necessarily, at the same time, judges that it does so imprudently, and contrary to its certain duty.

When, therefore, a compound utterance of God—that is, a *formal* utterance of doctrine, and a *real* utterance by means of the facts which clothe and manifest that doctrine,—is proposed to the understanding, that compound utterance is of itself, and of its own intrinsic idea, and not from any diverse motive, and therefore *immediately* understood *with certainty*, although *not with evidence*, to be a word not of men, but as it truly is, a word of God.

The will, therefore, remains free, for evidence alone could deprive it of its freedom: and the command of the free will is required in order to a firm assent of the understanding, which assent is therefore meritorious.

The divine facts, therefore, of which we have spoken are, under one aspect, motives of credibility; under another aspect they are themselves a Divine utterance.

Considered in relation to the truth which is proposed as revealed, they exhibit it to the understanding as evidently credible; and the understanding consequently exhibits to the will the evident duty of believing it. This judgment that the truth is credible and to be believed, is, under consideration of the motives, not free but necessary, because of the *evidence.*

Regarded in this way, the facts are properly *motives of credibility*, and not the formal motive of faith; for the one formal motive of faith is God revealing. We do not believe a doctrine, say that of the Trinity, with divine faith from this formal motive, that miracles and other signs have been wrought to confirm this doctrine, but simply and solely because God has revealed it. The miracles, under this aspect, merely render its credibility evident.

But if we consider the facts formally as, in conjunction with the doctrine, they complete a Divine

utterance, then they are not to be regarded merely as motives of credibility. They enter into and are component parts of an utterance of God, which utterance is the formal motive of faith; for not by words only, but along with words by those facts also does God Himself speak.

3. We come now, in the third place and finally, to consider the position of the Church as a means in order to divine faith on the part of man.

To see this clearly we must consider, first, the Church as herself a divine fact; and secondly, the testimony of the Church, formally as it is a testimony.

The doctrines which are proposed to us in the present as divine do not now for the first time proceed to us, as it were, straight from God. They proceeded from Him centuries ago; and throughout the course of those centuries they have been preserved until they have reached our day, and have come home to us. Hence, to know these doctrines as Divine, is the same as to know that they were revealed at the first by God, and that they have been preserved to us. The organ instituted by God in order to the promulgation, propagation, and preservation of His entire revelation, is the Teaching Church,—that is, the Apostles of Christ and their successors to the end of time. The Apostles God rendered knowable as His am-

bassadors in the promulgation of His revelation, by means of divine facts. "The Lord," as St. Mark says, "co-operated with them, and confirmed the word with signs that followed." "He bore them witness," says St. Paul, "by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost."

In immediate connection with the Apostles are their successors, a perpetual series of whom in immediate connection one with another in communion and doctrine throughout the world, reaches to our own day. From this connection with the Apostles and with Christ Himself, the Divine facts which belonged to Him and them belong also to the succeeding Church; which is itself also in every age sealed with new Divine facts, which demonstrate its Divine institution, and its connection with Christ and His Apostles.

The Divine facts of which we have spoken (p. 263) as belonging to Him, all belong to His Church. They belong to her either as her efficient and constituent principles; or as effects and, so to speak, *vital acts*, whereby she is made manifest as a supernatural, divinely instituted, divinely preserved, divinely directed and governed, and divinely living society.

The Church, One Body with Christ its Head, from the first beginning of the human race down to our own day, may be regarded as morally *one grand Divine fact*, in which Christ,—historically knowable

in His life, in His miracles, in prophecy fulfilled, in the sanctity and sublimity of His doctrine, in His mode of teaching, in His death, resurrection, and glorification,—is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega.

The manifold series of preceding and succeeding facts which are manifestations of the Church, proceed from Christ and converge to Christ, as rays to their centre, either as preparations or as effects. They demonstrate Christ as their supernatural cause, and from a knowledge of Christ they are in themselves more perfectly understood; as the cause is understood from a knowledge of its effects, and as effects again are understood from a knowledge of their cause.

As, therefore, Christ our Lord Himself, and as His apostles were rendered knowable as Divine ambassadors by means of Divine facts; so also is the Church,—both from her connection with Him as her Head and Founder, and from her connection with the apostles as her first pastors and members, and by means also of a perpetual series of divine facts,—manifestly set forth as a continuation of the legation of Christ and His apostles.

Hence we see how, under this aspect, the Church, *as herself a grand Divine fact*, is, as it were, a *constituent element* of a perpetual and perpetually recognisable *Divine utterance.* In this way, as

a constituent of what St. Augustine calls the "Divine eloquence," she enters into the formal motive of divine faith.

It is just as when a king speaks by his ambassador—the formal motive of belief in his royal word is his kingly authority, and not the royal seal, the diploma, or other credentials of the ambassador; but these, at the same time,—considered as along with his words composing one royal utterance, which from its connection with these is recognisable as in reality that of the king,—enter into the formal motive, or reason why men should believe his message, as it is the word of his royal master.

The importance of this doctrine as to the Church is apparent from the importance of its consequences.

It is easy for even the unlearned in the Catholic Church to have thus that knowledge of the divinity of the revelation proposed to them, without which faith would be impossible. The Catholic Church, as a manifestly divine fact,—not only as a motive of credibility showing evidently the credibility of the doctrine which she proposes, and the duty of believing it, but as also herself a constituent of the divine utterance, and rendering the divinity of that utterance knowable with certainty,—is easily recognised even by the unlearned, and known with a confused, indeed, but still with a sufficient knowledge.

A mode of Divine utterance, accommodated to

all men, and with regard to all revealed truths, is to be found only in the Catholic Church. Even to those who live in heretical communions outside the Catholic Church, in invincible and so in blameless ignorance of her divinity, the divinity of revelation comes, as it were, by rays shining forth from the Church.

Having considered the Church as she is a Divine fact, and so as she is a constituent part of the whole Divine utterance of revelation, we have now to consider her testimony, formally as it is a testimony, in its relation to Divine faith.

We may regard the proposition of revealed doctrine by the Church from two points of view.

We may, without as yet supposing the infallibility of the Church, consider its testimony formally as it is that of a Church invested with such signs and marks as are motives of its credibility; or we may consider it as it is infallible by reason of the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Under neither aspect is proposition by the Church, in the nature of things and absolutely, necessary in order that there should be an obligation of believing, or in order to Divine faith. In order to Divine faith, nothing else is necessary than that a Divine utterance should be rendered sufficiently knowable. This in itself, and

absolutely, might be effected in many other ways.

For instance, in the case of all those who received the faith by an immediate revelation of God, and who were constituted its first promulgators, there was no intervention of proposition by the Church. So also even now, absolutely speaking, the divinity of an utterance might be rendered knowable by means of miracles or by other motives of credibility.

If the testimony of the Church be regarded without as yet supposing belief in its infallibility, and only as it is the testimony of a society invested with so many and with such logical motives of credibility, that testimony is simply an application of the Divine facts, of which we have spoken, to the truths proposed, and in proof of their revelation. Those facts render the existence of a revelation knowable, and the truths contained in that revelation credible.

If, again, the testimony of the Church is considered, supposing its infallibility under the assistance of the Holy Ghost, then certainly such authority of the Church cannot be either a necessary motive of, or a necessary condition in order to, *every* act of faith.

This mode of infallibility, and this assistance of the Holy Ghost, cannot be known from intrinsic reasons, but can only be believed by an act of faith,

because of the authority of God revealing it. Hence, if an act of faith in the infallibility of the Church were necessarily to be supposed to *all* acts of faith, at least that first act could not pre-suppose another act of faith in the infallibility of the Church by the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

But not even in order to all other acts of faith is a knowledge of this infallibility of the Church necessary. Other articles of faith may, without doubt, be sufficiently proposed to men who do not as yet recognise the infallibility of the Church, so as that they may believe, and so as that they should be bound to believe them with Divine faith. There is no reason why we should deny acts of Divine faith in those who, brought up without fault of their own in some sect, are invincibly ignorant of the infallibility of the Church. Such men, so long as they do not sin grievously against faith, and are ready firmly to believe, and practically to embrace any revelation, should such revelation be sufficiently proposed to them, and therefore also to submit to the true Church itself, are only *materially* heretics; in disposition and habit they are really of the number of the faithful.

Habitual faith consists in that disposition of soul, effected by means of an infused supernatural permanent gift, in which there is connatural to man a voluntary subjection of his understanding to the authority of God, and a

readiness, by the aid of actual grace, to believe whatever may be sufficiently proposed as Divinely revealed. Hence habitual faith remains the same, whether the *explicit* knowledge of the matters to be believed be greater or less; just as it is lost by a deliberate denial of assent to even one revealed truth sufficiently proposed.

But, given all this, it yet remains true and manifest that the testimony of the Church, a testimony infallible through the assistance of the Holy Ghost, is that mode of proposition which is in the nature of things best adapted to the necessities of all men, that all may have knowledge, without admixture of error, of the whole body of the truths of faith. It is a mode necessary, in the present economy, in order to the preservation of the unity of faith within the Catholic communion. It is, moreover, the mode instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.

God destined His revelation made by Christ, and completed by the Holy Ghost in the Apostles, for all nations, and for all times. Hence for all nations even unto the ends of the earth, and for all times even to the consummation of the world, has He sent His ambassadors in a perpetual succession, and with an unbroken unity of understanding and purpose, and invested them with the signs and marks of their divine mission and authority.

The Catholic and Roman Church, by its apostolicity, universality, unity, and sanctity, may easily be recognised as that Body, by means of which Christ, its Head, perpetually preserves, proclaims, and explains the whole revelation of God. In this Church, therefore, and by means of her alone, has He provided for the proposition of all revealed doctrine in a manner accommodated to the necessities of all nations, and to the needs of every age. She is a grand, ever-present motive of credibility, —or rather, she is herself a compendium of all the motives of credibility,—whereby the divine revelation is rendered knowable, and the revealed doctrine which it contains is set forth as credible and to be believed.

All the motives of credibility wherewith Christ Himself and His Apostles, in virtue of the Holy Ghost, clothed their preaching of the Word, belong to her, in her manifest bond of oneness with Him and them, and belong to no other communion whatsoever.

To her alone also belongs the extension and continuation of those motives, in her marvellous preservation and propagation of the one Christian faith, and in those effects of that one faith, which manifestly transcend the power of all natural causes.

She is the one Church of the Nations and of the Ages, even as He foretold. She is the Jeru-

salem of earth, the City of Peace. She is the City compact together, to which the tribes go up. She is the City of the Great King, in which God reigns. She is the City set on an hill, which cannot be hid. She is the one Fold, within which the one Shepherd feeds the one Flock.

Had she no other note of the Divinity of her institution, of the Divinity of her existence, of the Divinity of the life wherewith she lives, of the Divinity of the mission wherewith she is sent, of the Divinity of the authority wherewith she speaks, the single note of her Divine unity would itself suffice. That she might possess this unmistakable, undeniable note, this property which all men must allow, which no man may gainsay, this unity manifest and evident to the deadliest of her enemies as to the most devoted of her children, this Divine token and testimony to the nations, which is at once the solid foundation of the reasonable faith of those who believe, and the just ground of the condemnation of those who refuse to submit themselves — that she might present to men throughout the ages the Divine testimony of this enduring miracle of her peerless unity—Jesus prayed to His eternal Father. He makes His petition, and in His petition He assigns its motive. He asks for unity as an evidence on which He may rest His whole case before the entire world of men; and which shall be an

evidence not only of the Divine mission and authority of His one Church, but of His own mission as the Messias of God, as the Incarnate Word, sent by His Eternal Father,—"That they all may be one, *that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me.*"

One with her His Body, we live with her life, which is His; and we have the unction of the Holy One. Taught by her, we know all things that God has revealed; and we need not that man should teach us, for we are taught of God. In her hands she holds the Written Word, that two-edged sword whereof the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life. From its sacred pages she reads to us the children whom she, the spotless Spouse of Christ, has begotten again unto God; and the words to which we listen from her lips, are words of God which make us wise unto salvation.

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